

Common Ground

What America Means to Me

—PEARL S. BUCK

DEMOCRACY BEGINS AT HOME—II

A Symposium

MADAM TO YOU! Langston Hughes

LABOR LENGTHENS ITS PERSPECTIVES

Monroe Sweetland

THIS IS THE PICTURE John Beecher

THAT I HAD THE WINGS Ralph Ellison

HOLLYWOOD AND THE AMERICAN SCENE

Ezra Goodman

— *and others* —

50c.

S U M M E R 1943

What is the
COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY?

WHAT are some of its purposes?

- To promote greater unity and understanding among all Americans.
- To further an appreciation of what each group has contributed to this country.
- To overcome discrimination because of birth, race, or nationality.
- To help the foreign born and their children share fully and constructively in American life.

HOW is it carrying out this program?

- Through its magazine, **COMMON GROUND**.
- Through educational articles in 27 languages, sent to 1,000 foreign-language newspapers.
- Through citizenship assistance to over 10,000 people a year.
- Through **Interpreter Releases**, a specialized information service about problems of aliens.
- Through the **American Common**, a meeting place where Americans of all backgrounds exchange ideas, experiences, and points of view.
- Through active co-operation with government agencies, civic and social organizations, nationality groups.

WHO belongs to the Common Council?

Membership in the Council is open to all who sympathize with its aims and wish to help carry on its activities. You are invited to join.

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Further information will be sent on request.

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CONTENTS

TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME	Pearl S. Buck	3
THIS IS THE PICTURE	John Beecher	11
GOEBBELS' FAVORITE WEAPON	Marie Syrkin	17
THIS MY BROTHER	Viva Hill	22
LABOR LENGTHENS ITS PERSPECTIVES	Monroe Sweetland	23
THAT I HAD THE WINGS	Ralph Ellison	30
OUR TOWN—AN ADVENTURE IN CO-OPERATION	Justus Lane	38
ANCIENT ADOBE SOIL	Dorothy L. Pillsbury	44
AN AMERICAN FINDS AMERICA	Herbert Kubly	49
CIVILIAN DEFENSE (Photographs)	Alexander Alland	57
DEMOCRACY BEGINS AT HOME—II		
GET THE EVACUEES OUT!	M. Margaret Anderson	65
RELOCATING A PEOPLE	Robert W. Frase	67
STUDENT RELOCATION	Robert W. O'Brien	73
BLUEPRINT FOR A SLUM	Eddie Shimano	78
ST. PAUL EXTENDS A HAND	Alice L. Sickels	86
MADAM TO YOU!	Langston Hughes	88
HOLLYWOOD AND THE AMERICAN SCENE	Ezra Goodman	91
STEPPE CHILDREN OF THE CZAR	Grace Cable Keroher	96
AMERICA'S FOLK MUSIC	David Ewen	103

DEPARTMENTS

Miscellany, 110

Schools and Teachers, 114

The Bookshelf, conducted by Henry C. Tracy, 116

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COMMON GROUND is published by the COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York City, as one part of its program to accomplish the following purposes:

To help create among the American people the unity and mutual understanding resulting from a common citizenship, a common belief in democracy and the ideals of liberty, the placing of the common good before the interests of any group, and the acceptance, in fact as well as in law, of all citizens, whatever their national or racial origins, as equal partners in American society.

To further an appreciation of what each group has contributed to America, to uphold the freedom to be different, and to encourage the growth of an American culture which will be truly representative of all the elements that make up the American people.

To overcome intolerance and discrimination because of foreign birth or descent, race or nationality.

To help the foreign-born and their children solve their special problems of adjustment, know and value their particular cultural heritage, and share fully and constructively in American life.

The work of the Council is supported by memberships and contributions: Subscribing Membership, \$3; Participating, \$5; Co-operating, \$10; Contributing, \$25; Supporting, \$50; Sustaining, \$100 and over. All memberships include subscription to COMMON GROUND. Subscription to COMMON GROUND alone is \$2.

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WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME

PEARL S. BUCK

TONIGHT I am upon my own home ground. We are neighbors in this countryside. Not far from this hall where I speak is my home, the only home I have ever had where I felt secure and among my own. My children at this moment lie asleep, healthy and happy under that roof. We live upon our own land, a contented American family, among our own fields and woods. We eat our own fruits and vegetables. We belong, for we are in our own country.

Therefore it seems to me that this is the time to do what I have never yet done—to speak, not of other peoples or of other lands where I have lived, but of the country which we here tonight love best of all, our own country, America.

I have not always lived here, as some of you know. Nearly the whole of my life, all except the last few years in fact, has been lived on the other side of the world from this one. My American parents took me there when I was three months old. My tongue learned another language before it learned English. My eyes were accustomed first not to the faces of my own people but to alien faces, although I did not know them alien and do not know them alien now. But those first impressions of childhood are always very strong. I was taught in another civilization before

I came to be part of my own. My unconscious memories are of another country and of another people. My own country and my own people I have approached only consciously and with full awareness of their meaning.

Now all this is of no particular importance except that it may interest you to know how our country seems to an American coming home to it freshly in full maturity after half a lifetime away, and that half a lifetime spent not in a savage or uncivilized country but in the oldest and one of the most civilized countries of the world. I'd like to tell you as simply and as clearly as I can what America means to me and how I feel about being an American.

The physical face of America is very beautiful. Not all of our country is beautiful, nor of any country, but we have as high a proportion of the beautiful, certainly, as any large country. Traveling westward over the mountains and deserts, traveling south, driving over New England and over the eastern states, my heart has often filled with pride in the natural beauty we possess. But China is a very beautiful country, too, and I was accustomed to natural beauty, though valuing it none the less for that. I soon began to

COMMON GROUND

try to discover the particular American quality of our fine landscape. I found it in its naturalness.

The beauty of older countries, such as China and India and even England, although England is still comparatively young compared to those two, is in the humanized aspect of the country. When a people has lived on a piece of the earth's surface for thousands of years, that land begins to have a human sort of look, a lived-upon look, like a very old house through which generations of the same family have passed. That is the beauty of the old countries of China and India. Man has become a part of their landscape. His houses fit the contours of hills and

a blue cotton cloth that is the same blue as the sky. Nothing startles. Even the homes and gardens of the rich are planned carefully in the same harmony with an old nature.

Here in our country the real beauty is the untamed beauty of a nature not yet in harmony with man. We have not come to grips with our country yet. We have not made even the soil our own as the people have in China, where for forty centuries men have been farmers upon the same farms and yet today the earth into which they sow seed and from which they reap harvests is as rich as ever, enriched literally by human waste from the living and by the flesh and blood and bones of the



rocks. Chinese houses, especially, have assumed architectural lines that seem molded to the shapes of mountains and valleys and plains. You can look at a Chinese landscape and not even see the villages and houses for a while, until your eye can pick them out, so perfectly are they a part of the whole. Chinese farmers, working in their fields, their brown backs bare under the sun, seem part of the land. Their work garments are nearly always of

millions of the dead of many generations. We use our country too ruthlessly, and she retaliates sometimes with tired fields and worn-out farms. We have not yet learned how to fertilize our land deeply.

Our landscape is not in full harmony with us yet, nor we with it. Our houses are what we build, each man after his own idea, and without much regard to the hills and valleys and plains around us. Only in a few places in America, and I am glad

WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME

that our region of Pennsylvania is one of them, do the people seem to have learned to build houses that are part of the landscape. And yet this very individualism has something American about it, as American as our untamed natural mountains and streams. Every man says to himself that he has the right to make the kind of house he wants and he does. What I felt, then, before I knew my own people, was that only a very individualistic, outspoken, forthright people could live in the houses I saw upon our landscape. Only a very natural sort of people could they be.

When I came to know better the people who lived in those houses, I was surprised that America is not richer than she is. On the other side of the world I had heard a great deal about our fabulous standard of living. Chinese, and indeed all Asiatic persons, said that they were excluded from our country lest they bring down our standard of living. I don't know what I expected, exactly—but somehow I had the notion from all this hearsay that Americans lived as only the rich do in China.

The first blow to this idea came perhaps when I saw Americans doing crude labor on docks and railways and in the places where such labor has to be done—a thing which no white man in the East would have considered possible for him. Then I began to see the true American idea that labor has nothing to do with standards of living. The man who works all day digging and hauling may go home at night to a comfortable house which may have a refrigerator and a furnace and a bathroom and all such conveniences. Well, that seemed splendid to me until I went on to discover that, after all, most houses in America don't have furnaces and refrigerators and bathrooms. These things are still luxuries, even here. Of course I knew very well that they are not necessities for comfort or cleanliness, for very

rich people indeed in China may live with none of these things and yet live in great magnificence. So even with all our conveniences we are not too rich in comparison with other peoples.

One needs only to travel in parts of the South and in the Dakotas, for example, and in many other places in our country to realize that our standards of living are not yet high enough and not universal enough. They are not much higher than those of peacetime China, to tell the truth, if we measure comfort in terms of adequate shelter, security, and good food.

Now this discovery that our country is not sitting in the midst of all the other countries like a millionaire in a slum, as I thought she was, was of great comfort to me. I was glad and I am glad to find that our problems are, by and large, still the problems of all peoples—how to get enough jobs for everybody, how to get our children educated, how to provide for our old, how to get our taxes paid. In short, I began to feel very much at home in my own country as soon as I discovered that ours is not a fabulous land, not a place of incredible wealth, but a country full of active struggling human beings, trying to make ends meet and get some pleasure out of life and do the best we can for our families and neighbors and friends. That is the way it is everywhere else, I can assure you. In some ways we do get along better than other peoples do, mainly in the things that science has done for us. In other ways we have succeeded less well than some peoples—Japan, for example, has a higher rate of literacy than we have, even with our splendid school system, and individual security is higher in China than it is here, because of the strong family group.

Well, taking it all in all, I liked my country better for being a nation where the people were struggling for more security and better health and better homes and

COMMON GROUND

better government. Today the fact that we are a nation of plain people, not in a position of great advantage over others, not in fact as rich in natural resources as some other countries, or in individual accumulation, makes us all the stronger as a democracy. We are not hampered by empire, for example. We do not have to hold other peoples down by force, or control unwilling territories by arms and bombers. We can say and prove it by what we are, that we believe in democracy and are ready to fight for it when it is threatened.

As I became familiar with our landscape and our ways, I began to find out what our people are like and I could contrast them with other peoples I knew. What are we like, we Americans? I take it for granted that we know we are not better or worse than other folk, for every people has its strengths and its weaknesses. But let me tell you what I think are our American strengths.

First, we are at our best when we are as natural as our landscape. Whenever we try to be different from our natural selves, from what we really are, we begin to look ridiculous. We are not an old people, and we cannot take on the ways of the old peoples without seeming artificial. That smoothness of finish which is so natural to European peoples, that haughtiness which is essential to the so-called upper-class, simply make us look silly. We Americans are like natural rock. Our glory and our strength are in our naturalness, in saying what we think, unashamed, in doing what we feel is right, unafraid. There is no more reason for us to be ashamed of what we are than for a column of unhewn granite to be ashamed because it is not a polished diamond. The granite has all its own strength and beauty and use.

This naturalness which is our greatest asset leaves us when we try to be subtle.

The only time I ever feel slightly ashamed of my own countrymen is when one of us tries to be subtle and diplomatic, to cope with those older people abroad who are subtle and diplomatic from old age. It is like a young strong man trying to pretend he is old and cynical and wise. When a young man does that, he loses his own real strength, which is to be young, to be strong, to take pride in his youth and strength. The old man has not the young man's strength and he resorts to his own compensations for it. But the young man is at his best when he is what he is.

Now, therefore, at this moment in our history when for the first time we are coming into our full place in the world, let us remember that our American strength is in our youth and our naturalness. We do not know how to play politics among the far older politicians of other countries. Those old politicians only smile when they watch us trying to play their game, like old card sharps watching a boy at his first real game of cards. But they are afraid of us when we cut across politics with the demand for reality, for truth-telling and simplicity, those things in which we are strong because we can be, because we dare to be.

I am proud of our plainness. We are plain people. We hate false fashionable-ness and high-hatting and what we so eloquently call "dog." I was once trying to explain the slang use of that word "dog" to a very old Chinese gentleman, a gentleman so old that he was far beyond any false notions of sophistication and cynicism. Perhaps it is only the half-old people who are very sophisticated and cynical, anyway. The Chinese and the Indians are not. And of course "dog" is a very American word. I believe it was first used by an American in 1871, to mean "style" or "splurge." It was not used outside of America until the first

WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME

world war, when our soldiers carried it over to England and thence it went to Australia.

"Dog?" my old Chinese gentleman repeated, puzzled. To him the word meant only the animal—"kou," as he called it in Chinese.

"I think it means to act like a big dog among a lot of little ones," I explained.

He was a stout old gentleman and at that moment, it being winter, he was enveloped in many layers of silk-padded robes. Then from out of the middle of that mountain of man I heard a rumble begin, and soon he shook with laughter.

"Dog," he said again. "Dog! Yes. Wait until I tell that to my new daughter-in-law just out of college. She thinks she knows more than I do. What is the word for female dog?"

"No, no," I said hastily. "That is something else again."

As it happened, "dog" was good enough, for the young lady had been educated in America and was perfectly able to understand what the old gentleman meant.

It is our plainness that makes the other peoples of the world like us and trust us, the great plain peoples, the Russians and the Chinese and the Indians, the peoples who are so old that they can see through all pretenses. We shall hold our own with these peoples, who are far more than half the people in the world, as long as we are our plain selves.

I am proud of our forthrightness. Whenever our leaders have, in the course of our history, cut across the tangle of complexities put out by lesser men to obscure the issues, whenever our leaders have dared to be forthright and outspoken, our whole nation has risen to new strength.

In 1776 when in the midst of com-

plexities greater than we have now, greater because we were so small and weak and because we faced powers so much stronger than we were, and faced division in our own country too, far deeper than we now have, at that time our leaders, deciding for freedom, gathered behind them all true Americans.

"But when," the Declaration of Independence said, "a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing inevitably the same object, evidence a design to reduce them"—that is, the people—"under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new guards for their future security."

We won that war for freedom because, in spite of difficulties and complexities, we came out with simplicity and forthrightness. We were ourselves, the plain people, the people of America.

In 1864 Abraham Lincoln, that plain American, cutting across the tangles of defeats and disunities, said these clear and forthright words: "Now therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power vested in me as Commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and Government of the United States and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion . . . do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free."

By these two declarations for freedom, each taken in times of great national distress and confusion, our people regained their true being and strode forward to win the wars in which they were entangled.

Now we are entangled in international confusion. We fight this war, knowing that it must be fought. But we can win it only by using our own true force, by

COMMON GROUND

speaking out plainly against old-world politics and old-world dissensions, in our plain American forthright way.

The time has come again to speak for freedom, this time not only for ourselves, not only for people enslaved in our own country. The world has grown far smaller today than even our own country was in the days when those two earlier freedoms were declared. We are nearer to India here in Allentown tonight than we were in those days to our own west coast, and much nearer. We are nearer to China. Today the world waits for a clear simple plain declaration for the freedom of all peoples, spoken in a plain American voice.

I am proud because we are a friendly people. All over the world wherever ordinary Americans have traveled—not diplomats and big business men, but just the ordinary Americans—we have left behind us a warm afterglow of friendly feeling. The Chinese people like our people because we are friendly by nature. We like human beings and we love a joke. The stories that are coming back to us now from India, for example, are heart-warming stories. Our American boys are showing the people of India a new kind of white man—a white man who is a plain human being before he is a soldier or an official. Our American boys don't have to bother to uphold any traditions of empire and of the white man as ruler and all that, and in their hours off duty they are having a good time playing with Indian children and making friends with whoever happens to be around.

Maybe you have heard some of the stories about our boys in India. The one I like best is the one someone tells about having seen a bunch of them out riksha-riding, and of seeing some of them take a riksha coolie and put him in his own riksha while they pulled him, just for fun. Well, you need to know what a riksha

coolie is before you can really appreciate that story. They are the poorest, the most ill-fed, the most hard-worked of human creatures. I can just see that Indian coolie—half starved, so thin his naked black legs look spidery, feverishly anxious to do a good job and please the Americans so as to get a scrap more pay, sweating and mopping himself with a rag, his wretched garments flying behind him as he runs. I don't suppose he was ever pulled in a riksha in his life and certainly he never sat in his own. And I suppose he was a little frightened when our boys yelled at him, "Hey, you!" He is used to blows and kicks from white men. And then they push him into his riksha and he has to sit down on that cotton covered cushion he tries to keep clean and inviting for passengers, and before he knows it the merry gang of boys is pulling him along the street, laughing and yelling, and everybody stares for a minute and then they begin to laugh and he begins to laugh and he sees it is all a joke, and perhaps for the first time in his life he realizes that here are white men with whom he can laugh and of whom he need not be afraid because they don't want to be his masters. And when it is all over, they pay him his regular fare as if he had pulled them, and for him, forever after, Americans are friendly people.

This precious quality, this great quality of our people, the power of human understanding which makes us a friendly people, must never be lost. It must never be lost through the ambitions of a few men to make America into a new imperialistic power. We must fight as we fight the Germans and the Japanese our own ambitious men who would make of America a country to be feared and hated by those who want to be free. This war is more than a war against the Axis. It is a war against any who would destroy

WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME

us. The Axis would destroy us and so we must fight the Axis. But the fascism of the Axis is part of an evil thing that must not grow anywhere in the world. Fascism lurks everywhere like the hidden germs of deadly disease. It hides in places where we least suspect it. There are germ-carriers of fascism in every nation. Those

for fair play, evolved a democratic form of government in which we the people can, if we will, insist on American ways of thought and behavior. We who are the people have the tools of democracy in our hands. We can control our government. We have the ways of doing it. We choose our leaders and are led



who harbor race prejudice are germ-carriers of fascism. Those who would build up a great international power of business in the hands of the few at the expense of the people are germ-carriers of fascism. Those who dream of America as the next great imperialist power are germ-carriers of fascism. All who secretly or openly scorn the rights of human beings are germ-carriers of fascism. It is these whom we must discover and deprive of their power.

Can we do it? We must and we can. For I am proud that here in America, our country, we have not only the most democratic people in the world, the most honestly forthright, the most friendly, but we have out of this democratic nature of our people, out of our real passion

by them only so long as they truly represent us.

We have the right of free speech, and that means the right of open criticism. We can tell our leaders what we think, and this can happen in only a very few countries in the world today. We can tell anybody what we think. One of the things in my life which brings me more comfort than anything else these days is that my mail, for example, is crowded with letters from people I do not know and will probably never know, people from all over America. What do they write to me for? Why, simply to tell me that they like or don't like something I have said or written. They divide fairly evenly between approval and disapproval, but the point is not whether they ap-

COMMON GROUND

prove. The point is that they take it as their right to tell me straight what they think. And they have that right, just as I have the right to speak or write, in the first place. We all have the right to speak as we think and we have the right to denounce or to uphold our leaders and each other.

It is the most glorious right in the world, for it means that the people in our country have freedom from fear because we are a free people. We are not ruled by a foreign government or by a political system which forbids the plain people to speak aloud. We govern ourselves through those whom we choose and we are not subject to them but they to us.

We must never forget this. The only real danger to our country is from within—that we forget our own power to be what we want to be. Let no American today take refuge in resignation in that state of wilful helplessness which shrugs its shoulders and says, "What can I do?" We have the right and the power to make our country what we want it to be. We are the kind of people that democracy produces—free, independent in our thought and behavior, fearless, forthright, and kind. I have seen many peoples of the earth and it is not only patriotism, I think, when I tell you that we possess these qualities to a greater degree than any other people. It is not boasting when I say this, for, like a child born with great gifts, we have these qualities not by any effort of ours, but bestowed upon us by our ancestors, by those brave men and women who came here from other lands because freedom was essential to them—the freedom to worship God as they willed, the freedom to work and keep themselves and their families from want, the freedom to believe and to speak as they believed, the freedom to live unafraid and at peace beneath the open sky.

We who are the children of those people who gathered here from all over the earth, from many nations and many races, to build a new country which should be the land of the free, must today march on to fuller freedom. Our great strides have always been taken in the cause of freedom—freedom from empire first, freedom from slavery second, and now it must be that third and greatest freedom for which we fight—the freedom of all mankind.

There are brave men fighting for us on the battle front. But we too are on the battle front. Here in field and factory, in homes and schools, everywhere throughout our land, we are embattled in the same cause, to rid ourselves and our country and, with us, all mankind of the black threat of fear from those who deny the right of peoples to be free. This war is our war. We must win it, for if we lost it we would lose all that we hold most dear. This American earth would be no more valuable than any other if upon it we could not live in freedom.

We have everything for which to fight—America, our own country, founded in freedom, grown great in freedom, our people the most fortunate upon earth, not because we are rich but because we are free. We have everything with which to win—we have in our hands the tools to keep our freedom and to make the kind of life that human beings should have. We can do what we will. We are Americans.

This was an address delivered by Pearl Buck at a United States Treasury Bond Rally in Allentown, Pennsylvania, February 24, 1943. It will be the title piece of her new book, What America Means to Me, to be published by John Day in June.

Bernadine Custer is the illustrator.

THIS IS THE PICTURE

JOHN BEECHER

1912

YANKEE BOY!" they yelled, and I could hear their feet starting up the chert path from the schoolyard behind me. A rock bounced off a tree close by. Another hummed over my head. I wanted to run, because I could outrun almost anybody with the legs I was growing. But Yankees didn't run.

At least they didn't in the bound volume of Harper's Illustrated Weekly for 1863 which my grandfather had given me. We looked mighty good charging those Rebel ramparts, the enemy breaking before us. We looked even better, it seemed to me then, with the freed slaves crowding along the roadside, the women holding up their babies to see us as we marched past.

But this was 1912 and things were not the same in Alabama. I didn't know it, but Sarah the colored cook did, because when the Fourth of July came around and I marched into the kitchen with a big American flag and told Sarah, "Salute this flag! It made you free!" she acted as if she didn't even see the flag or hear me and went on cooking. Afterwards I thought and thought about why Sarah wouldn't salute the flag that made her free. . . .

Raymond was just walking along with a big rock in his hand, and the colored boy was coming from the opposite direction and he didn't say anything to Raymond, but Raymond didn't like the uppity way he was walking so when they got close

Raymond hauled off and chunked that big rock right at his head. It knocked a hole in his forehead. I know, because I saw. . . .

Stank and Jimbo and that boy that lived next the Confederate graveyard and always carried brass knucks in his hip pocket would hide in the bushes along the path by the graveyard after school. Nobody took care of the graves any more and the place was just like a jungle in there. And when a colored girl came by on the way home from school, Stank and Jimbo and the boy with the brass knucks would jump out and drag her inside the graveyard. . . .

At big recess we would watch the chain gang while we ate our lunches. They were building a street along the far edge of the schoolyard so Judge Maxwell could get in and out with his Cadillac. They were all Negroes. They all wore striped black and white suits plastered with red mud. They all had chains from ankle to ankle so they could only take short steps and couldn't run. They worked under the gun, the white guard always standing with his rifle slanted in their direction. He also had a big pistol in a holster and a belt full of cartridges. I don't remember ever hearing that chain gang sing while they worked on the street, and when they got their dinner—tin plates full of cowpeas out of a black iron washpot with a fire under it—they just ate the cowpeas without any sound but the sound of their eating. Then, one day out in the woods behind the school,

COMMON GROUND

I found a leg chain along the path, where some Negro had somehow managed to escape and file off his chain. I took that leg chain home inside my coat, not telling anybody about it, and I locked it in my box I had a key to, along with some old lead bullets my grandfather said came from Gettysburg battlefield. . . .

1920

The street was straight and narrow up to the steel plant. The buildings along it were low and dirty—pawnshops, cheap cafes, stores selling overalls, work shoes, canvas gloves with red stars on the gauntlets. In the pawnshop windows were gold watches and pistols. The loan sharks took these in for security, and when they couldn't get security they lent money without it: they knew how to collect. Two bits on the dollar every pay day was the interest rate—about ten per cent a week. I knew a Negro up in the plant who had borrowed \$10, paid back \$60 and still owed \$25. On pay day the loan sharks stood out in front of their shops under the three gold balls and collared the men who owed them money as they came from the paycar at the head of the street. The cops walked up and down. All the beggars were there—the old colored man with the guitar on his leg stumps, and the little boy holding out a cup, the old colored woman who read a braille Bible out loud. The snake oil man stood on his wagon and spieled. A dollar a bottle the snake oil was, and it would cure lost manhood, lumbago, “bad blood” (syphilis), or anything else that ailed you.

As you went up the street into the steel plant, the blast furnaces were on the right; the open hearth, Bessemer converters, soaking pits, and rolling mills on the left. I went to the left, to the open hearth. I was 16 and had a good job,

keeping track of everything that happened on the open hearth and up at the Bessemer converters: how much pig iron they had in the mixers from hour to hour; how many pots the converters blew; when No. 6 furnace charged scrap, melted down, took hot metal, was all-in, tapped, what she made—whether rail, plow, wire, or structural steel; how long the helpers made bottom on No. 3; when No. 9 went down for repairs to the front-wall and when they switched the flame back on her. All this meant I had to be on the go from when I started at seven in the morning till I got off at five-thirty in the evening. Later I was on nights, from five-thirty in the evening till six-thirty in the morning.

But I was lucky because I had a chance to learn everything. I would skip college, I decided. When I was 18, I would go to work as a third-helper on a furnace, and after a couple or three years of that get to be a pit boss, then night superintendent, and so on up. That's what I thought until some things began to bother me.

At first I didn't know what it was bothering me. I'd forgotten all about Harper's Illustrated Weekly for 1863. I thought I had anyhow. I'd been living in the South a long time. Wherever you live, you get used to things, how they are, as if they had to be that way. Then something happens. One day you come to. You suddenly see the things you've just been looking at.

It hit me one Saturday night when we'd tapped out all the heats early. It was about three o'clock in the morning and I could have gone home and got some night-time sleep for a change. Instead I went into the mill office, grabbed a sheaf of yellow paper, and started to write. I didn't know what: there was just something that had to get said. Four or five hours later I had used up all the yellow

THIS IS THE PICTURE

paper and went home to bed in Sunday morning sunlight. These are the things that had been bothering me:

Up and down the open hearth floor you saw only white men: old melters with their hairy chests and bellies, helpers shoveling in the furnace glow, charging car men riding their huge machines, cranemen in their high cages, pull-ups at their levers, dinky engineers with pots of sloshing red metal from the Bessemer. White men only on the tapping platform when a furnace went over, the dazzling steel cataracting in the ladle. White men in the pulpit where the Bessemer were controlled, the great flames licking into billowing orange fume beyond the window. White men on the pouring tables where they teemed the steel in molds—the steel pourer at the lever next the smoking ladle, the tableman spooning out a test from the liquid metal column, the ingot chaser with his record pad, the ladle craneman in his dark cage where the switches crackled blue, the test boy crawling out of the aluminum box where he'd been asleep. All white.

All Negroes though on the slaghole gang. After the steel ran blinding into the ladle came the slag, softer on the eyes, pink through blue furnace glasses, sudsy, spilling over the ladle sides and swirling down the runners into slagpots. When the crane picked the ladle up to swing it over to the pouring table, the Negroes on the slaghole gang came swarming out of the tunnels underneath the furnaces, turned hoses on the foamy slag clotting the pit's dirt floor, then hit it with picks and shovels while it was still red. They said no white man could keep up with that gang. As they worked next the slagpots, little volcanoes built up as the stuff crusted over and the molten inside kept erupting through. Sometimes one of these would blow like a big Roman candle, and the slaghole gang

would duck back into the tunnels fast as cockroaches, then come on back and hit it again with their picks and shovels. Sometimes, too, a slagpot would blow all the way up and kill people. The trouble with a slag burn was the phosphorus in the stuff: it not only burned; it poisoned. A slag burn no bigger than a match head would spread into a pus-filled sore the size of a quarter.

Negroes worked with the brickmasons repairing and rebuilding furnaces and pulling out checker chambers. They didn't lay brick. Never. Before a furnace had time to cool down even, they went in with picks and sledges and started knocking out the old steel-bitten, slag-crusted brickwork. That was their part of the job, that and wheeling in new brick when the masons got to working. They piled the old debris and new brick out in front on the open hearth floor, and it was their lookout for cranes with loads, charging cars, and dinkies pulling hot metal pots.

Down at the lime plant which burnt limestone and dolomite for the open hearth, white men were the burners and the cranemen, Negroes the sweepers. That was the worst place to work in the whole steel plant. Lime or dolomite dust in your shoes will raise big blisters on your sweaty feet, will raise welts on your eyeballs, burning as the moisture slakes it. It does worse things when you breathe it. At the lime plant everything was covered with the deadly white dust—from the floor under the big rotary kilns up to the tops of the tall stacks pluming dusty smoke. Men who worked there were powdered with dust from head to foot. The Negroes would have to go under the kilns and sweep up the dust, bending over double. You couldn't see the men under there—just the huge dust cloud they were raising. A sweeper would tie a handkerchief over his mouth and go

COMMON GROUND

down. He would stay five minutes and then come running out, his clothes sopped with wet, coughing. He would go drink water and hang over a rail, breathing outside air. Five minutes sweeping. Five minutes resting. That was the way they worked. A good sweeper's lungs lasted ten years on the average.

What I wrote that night was about one of those Negro sweepers, one whose lungs had given out. The company let him come to work and just lie around on a wheelbarrow waiting to die. "The company's mighty good to me," he would tell you. I wrote the piece because I had to write it—and I filled in some about his life in the company quarters across the mill fence, about how he got in the hands of a loan shark, things like that. A lot of people read that piece then, though it hasn't been printed till now. One was a great poet. He said, "You have got to watch out for taking sides. A writer can't afford to." I didn't know what he meant then, because I didn't know about any sides. I had just put it down the way it was.

1934

The county doctor really put the neorosephenamine to them. Every Thursday the truck from the Negro prison farm would unload at the courthouse, and the syphilitics—men and women—would be marched into the gloomy basement under the guards' guns. There they would sit on benches along with the Negro relief clients waiting for their shots. The county doctor came from what is called one of the best families in South Carolina and was just doing this as part of his training, not because he had any love for it. He yanked the Negroes around, yelled at them, jabbed the needle into them as if it were a bayonet. When a woman had a reaction and keeled over on the stone floor foaming at the mouth,

it didn't bother the doctor any. He just let her lie.

When I first came to that city as relief administrator, I was warned not to call any of the Negro case workers Miss or Mrs. My predecessor had slipped up once and said "Miss Appleby" instead of "Victoria" when speaking to a Negro case worker. Somebody had overheard and a delegation went to the state capital about it. When I arrived to take over the job, the chairman of my advisory committee said he was glad I was raised in Alabama: they knew how to handle Negroes in Alabama, he said.

Victoria Appleby was the best social worker I ever knew. There was an uproar when I raised her pay from \$19.62 to \$23.08 a week. This was more than a lot of white people in the organization were getting. They came to see me about it, and they weren't satisfied when I explained that it was because Victoria Appleby had professional training which they didn't have. What difference did that make, they wanted to know—wasn't she colored and weren't they white? The county doctor didn't like my raising her pay either and took it out on her relief clients. He refused to certify the transfer of a seriously arthritic relief worker from a swamp drainage project to a job where he wouldn't have to work in water up to his hips. When Victoria Appleby went to him about it, just as nicely as she knew how, he cursed her for "an uppity black bitch" and drove her out of the clinic. As I have said, he came from what is called one of the best families in South Carolina.

One day a delegation of important business men called at my office. They said the strawberries were rotting in the fields in adjoining counties because the lazy city Negroes wouldn't go out and pick them. They demanded I cut off all Negro relief in the city. I said I couldn't

THIS IS THE PICTURE

without finding out how many workers were needed, what they got paid for picking berries, and what the living conditions were. The delegation said if I wouldn't come along on the proposition they would see to it that I got my orders. Before the day was over a telegram from the state administrator ordered me to stop all direct and work relief to Negroes until further notice. Relief to whites was to continue.

I sent three investigators into the strawberry fields. They found pickers were clearing—over what they were charged for food and lodging—from 20 cents to a dollar a week. Sixty men, women, and children lived in a barn, sleeping on the floor. Twenty were bunked in a one-room shack. For water they walked a mile or so to the branch. For privy they used the woods. The local newspapers wouldn't touch the story, but when I got a progressive outside newspaper to send in a reporter and his stories began running, the state administrator asked me to investigate.

1942

In January I was appointed southern field representative for the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice. In June of the year before, the President had signed an Executive Order saying there should be no more discrimination in defense industries or government. Over all the months since then the FEPC had been trying to check discrimination around the country, except in the South. Nothing had been done in that region before I started. My territory extended from the Potomac to the Rio Grande.

For months I investigated war plants and government training schools. I went to Mobile, New Orleans, Atlanta, Birmingham, Savannah, San Antonio, Lake Charles, Columbia, Memphis, Jackson, Chattanooga, Dallas, Macon, Nashville,

Ft. Worth, Talladega, Jacksonville, Houston, Brunswick, Norfolk, Tallahassee, Goldsboro, Milledgeville, Montgomery, and Little Rock. Everywhere I saw Negroes doing the menial, dirty, lower-paid jobs I had been seeing them do all my life in the South. That was not new. What was new was how they felt about it. In all these cities I have named they felt the same way and, what was more, they didn't care who knew it. They wanted a square deal. They were determined to get a square deal. Everywhere they were holding protest meetings. Everywhere they had defense job and training committees at work trying to beat down the old barriers. Everywhere, so far as I could find out, the Negroes were solid. This wasn't something stirred up by "agitators." Back of this movement were all the Negro newspapers—even the most conservative—and all the Negro leadership. Even men who had been known as "Uncle Toms" had to get behind it or be read out of the race.

In June the FEPC held public hearings in Birmingham. For three days, evidence of how the Negroes are kept down in the southern industrial system was spread on the record—for the first time in history. The facts were not new. But it was new for the FEPC's two Negro members to cross-question white employers from the federal bench. It was new for Negro witnesses from all over the South to speak out in the courtroom and condemn the system under which they lived. It was new for the white representatives of labor organizations—both CIO and AFL—to make common cause with the Negroes and to put on the record their determination to back up the government in putting an end to discrimination.

In July I was on my way north, to become regional representative for the FEPC in New York. Another Yankee was going

COMMON GROUND

back where he came from, at last. Almost a year has gone by since then—two years since the President signed the “Second Emancipation Proclamation,” Executive Order 8802. Despite what the Birmingham hearings showed could be done in the South, there was no follow-up and nothing has been really changed. Late in the summer the FEPC was transferred into the War Manpower Commission and made subject to the direct supervision of Paul V. McNutt. From that point on, slow strangulation was the lot of the agency, though the President had reassuringly insisted that the transfer was “intended to strengthen—not to submerge—the Committee, and to reinvigorate—not to revoke—Executive Order 8802. McNutt’s abrupt cancellation of the FEPC hearings on anti-Negro discrimination by the railroads scheduled for January of this year was only the public give-away of the Administration’s private surrender—made months before—on the whole question.

The surrender of the government is nothing new. The deal of 1876, when the North decided to let the South settle “the Negro problem” in traditional ways, es-

tablished a pattern of federal capitulation which is now close to becoming a tradition in its own right. The Negroes who are a quarter of the South’s population have not surrendered, however, and that is new. The protest meetings continue. The southern Negro newspapers go on hammering the paradox of undemocratic discrimination in the midst of a war for democracy. The southern Negro leadership has not backed down. Southern Negroes have been shaken out of the immemorial apathy and resignation which so long passed for “contentment.” Although they have very nearly lost faith in the federal government, they have greater faith in themselves than ever before in history. They still want a square deal. They are still determined to get it. With 9,000,000 people feeling that way, something is going to happen.

After some months of reporting for the New York Post, John Beecher recently joined the mixed crew of the Booker T. Washington under Captain Hugh Mulzac, first Negro to command a merchant vessel.

GOEBBELS' FAVORITE WEAPON

MARIE SYRKIN

ONE OF the teachers in my high school came up to me recently looking flustered. "There's another one of those things on the blackboard." I knew what she meant by "one of those things." We had had frequent occasion to talk about them lately. "One of those things" was one of a series of vicious anti-Semitic jingles which have been bobbing up in various schools throughout New York City.

On the face of it, there is nothing novel about anti-Semitic propaganda circulated amid any sector of the population. The phenomenon has become so common that in moments of depression one wonders if there is any point in discussing the subject at all. However, the present outbreak seems to be a fresh variation of the familiar technique, and has features which are particularly alarming.

In the first place, it seems to be directed particularly at children of school age, instead of being confined to older groups. Teachers in both elementary and high schools in various parts of the city have told me of the simultaneous appearance of identical anti-Semitic "lyrics" among their pupils. In the second place, the nature of the verses indicates the existence of an organized, skillful campaign directed from one source, rather than the sporadic efforts of individual crackpots.

The jingles in question are, for the most part, parodies of well-loved, patriotic songs whose melody is familiar and whose sentiments are part of every American child's heritage. The witticisms of the text are not directed at the supposed general

characteristics of Jews but are invariably concentrated on one point: Jews are staying home, waxing rich, while Gentiles are fighting the "Jews' war." To illustrate: One current parody on our national anthem begins this way:

*Oh say can you see, by the dawn's early
light,
To save the Jews' skins, all we Gentiles
must fight.*

The Marine's song, "From the Shores of Montezuma," becomes

*From the shores of Coney Island,
Looking out into the sea,
Stands a kosher air-raid warden,
Wearing V for victory,*
who chants:
*Let those Christian saps, go fight the
Japs,
In the uniforms we've made. . . .*

Even "My Bonnie lies over the ocean" has not escaped these poets, and, no doubt, everyone has heard "Praise the Lord, and draft another Christian."

The technique is worth noting. In each case a framework hallowed by precious associations has been filled with a new vicious context. Every young American is conditioned to an automatic favorable response when he hears the "Star-Spangled Banner." The natural revulsion from the ugly and false is stilled by the familiar melody and rhythm. Some of the agreeable associations of the original are carried over instinctively and help give a spurious validity to the parody. The proc-

COMMON GROUND

ess is an unconscious one, but it is precisely in the exploitation of the recesses of the unconscious that the Goebbels' technique is most effective. Furthermore, since the parody follows a familiar word pattern, the words are more easily retained and have a greater opportunity to leave a dent in the mind.

So many of these parodies are appearing in widely scattered sections of the city that it becomes impossible to view the similarity of method as accidental. A psychologically potent propaganda device is being shrewdly utilized to the limit. The object of the campaign is only incidentally the Jew. The real target is the morale of American youth. Hitler has boasted repeatedly that with anti-Semitism as the entering wedge, he would disrupt public confidence and unity in the United States and win the war. The pattern and purpose of this parody epidemic is so obvious that it needs no demonstrating. What does require emphasis is the insufficient seriousness with which it is being taken. Too many people are still inclined to dismiss the scurrilous sheets that are being circulated, the doggerel that finds its way unexpectedly to the classroom blackboard, as nonsense to be disregarded. Erase it, as you would erase some adolescent obscenity that you notice penciled on a desk or jotted into the grammar book; pay no attention to it. Don't exaggerate its significance—that is the usual policy.

The problem is not a simple one. When the text of one of these lyrics turned up in my school and was finally discovered reposing on a teacher's desk, several members of the faculty were asked to consider the matter. The decision reached was the orthodox one. The teachers concluded that there was no point in giving further publicity to the libel by raising the subject in the classroom. The principal put a notice on the bulletin

board in which he urged the faculty to inculcate tolerance and goodwill in their students, and there the matter ended. This procedure is typical.

I am well aware of the danger of publicizing a slander. I know that no matter how brilliantly you may expose the falsity of a charge, the aroma of the accusation continues to cling, and that, consequently, it may be wiser psychologically not to increase the sphere of influence of a libel by drawing attention to it. I am equally well aware of the futility of combatting an intangible, irrational prejudice with a battery of logical expositions and denials. More positive measures must be conceived.

However, this particular anti-Semitic campaign has so immediate and menacing an objective that one cannot afford to disregard it while waiting for more wholesome attitudes to develop. We know from the evidence that the parodies enjoy a large sub rosa circulation. We know also that the circulation includes not only reactionary elements and the lunatic fringe of the population—who are usually the first reached by anti-Semitic pornography—but children and adolescents. A large audience has been adroitly created through the combination of familiar tunes and "amusing" words. And into this audience is energetically being drummed the notion that each boy who is drafted is fighting for the Jews, while the latter sit back and capture all the jobs.

This is, obviously, not primarily a Jewish question. When anti-Semitic propaganda is being used so directly to sabotage the war effort, the challenge must be met in a fashion which indicates that the real nature of the attack is being recognized. It is quite true that if, on a given day, the teachers of my school were to arise and announce to their classes that

GOEBBELS' FAVORITE WEAPON

Jews are not slackers, and were to quote the available statistics, concluding with a eulogy of Meyer Levin, the result might not be all that had been expected from the marshaling of irrefutable factual data. The very necessity for apologies and explanations might itself arouse doubts and uneasiness in even a sympathetic listener.

It is possible, however, to take another tack. In view of the increasingly widespread effort to sow disaffection and disloyalty by the use of the favorite Nazi technique, the emphasis should be shifted. Apologetics are humiliating to those concerned and ineffectual in the bargain. But if schools were to view the appearance of such anti-Semitic propaganda in their midst as an attack on America rather than on the Jews, a quite different psychological atmosphere could be created. We instruct our students in First Aid. We teach them to detect various types of poison gas. We coach them in the merits of the rationing system so they will accept minor or major privations in a proper spirit of co-operation. Is it not time to realize that a timid silence concerning Hitler's most effective disruptive device is at least as harmful to the country as a whole as it is to our Jewish citizens?

It would be unwise to minimize the power of anti-Semitism as a means of infecting young minds with defeatism and disloyalty to the cause of democracy. Precisely because of the proven effectiveness of this weapon directed against the nation, the methods of counterattack should be viewed as one of our wartime problems. Many people assume that the patent absurdity of Hitler's endlessly reiterated fulminations against the Jews in every public utterance has finally proven a boomerang. Superficially, this may be so. After a while people get sick of hearing the same eternal attack on "Jewish" Bolshevik Russia and "Jewish" plutocratic Britain, etc. But there is a method in this Hitler

madness. As he has indicated in his remarkable chapter on propaganda in *Mein Kampf*, by this endless repetition he has managed to condition an entire generation with an almost instinctive antagonism toward the concept "Jew." Even if the conscious mind rebels against a transparent stupidity and falsehood, the invariable meeting of the word in an unpleasant context leaves an imprint on the psyche. No aspect of Nazi psychological warfare is more diabolically clever than the practical use to which Goebbels and his associates have put the findings of modern psychology in their exploitation of anti-Semitism. The systematic stimulation of old, dormant prejudices, and the subsequent channeling of this vague energy into a fierce force is as much a part of the Hitler machinery of destruction as the armies he has raised and drilled.

Fascist elements in the United States are emulating this process. When they reach into the schools, it becomes our obligation to face the issue squarely. Many of our students have nothing in their home environment to enable them to understand the nature of the campaign to which they are being subjected. Suppose the teacher, instead of erasing the board quickly, took the time, since the opportunity has presented itself, to explain plainly what is at stake. This is not easy. There is the diffidence of the teacher, the painfulness of the subject, the presence of Jewish students. But if the theme is presented in its true aspect as part of the enemy's attack on the nation, then the question is lifted to the plane of a problem facing all patriotic Americans concerned with victory. It ceases to be the melancholy, thousand-times-repeated exposure of a libel, but becomes instead the exposure of the enemy's offensive, and transfers the onus from the slandered to the spreader of the slander.

One does not say to a class, "Do you

COMMON GROUND

think poison gas is bad?" Nor does one skip the subject of gas attack, when it happens to come up, because gases may have noxious odors. Instead, one gives explicit and categorical instructions for their detection.

This analogy is far from exact. I am fully aware of the complexity of the problem of coping with so insidious a foe as a scientifically fostered prejudice. But, judging from the growing strength of anti-Semitic propaganda, it is clear that our past methods of dealing with the evil have failed. The anti-defamation publications find their most eager readers among the defamed. Nor has the studied silence of educational institutions proven discreet.

Even the most obvious sources of enlightenment are muzzled in the current climate of silence. In every class I have, there are several Jewish refugees. These boys and girls are for the most part attractive, intelligent, and conscientious. I have heard all kinds of unflattering reports about refugees: they are supposed to be arrogant, afflicted with a martyr complex, ungrateful, and heaven knows what else. My own experience with refugee high school students has been most favorable. Their fellow pupils sometimes complain about their industry, but that can hardly appear as a fault in the eyes of a teacher.

One would assume that the presence of a bright, charming, young girl with a pretty face and a delicious German accent would be the most telling refutation of the Nazi race doctrines. But I often wonder if the class identifies these agreeable characters with the "refugees" of whom they hear. For the refugees practically never speak of their experiences. When Germany is discussed, they are silent. On one occasion this term, a Regents question we were discussing dealt with "realistic" versus "propaganda" war motion pic-

tures. My pupils, as usual were very blithe in dismissing pictures which showed Nazi atrocities as "propaganda." They didn't believe *Hitler's Children*. Even *The Moon Is Down* placed too great a strain on their credulity. At this point, one of my refugees arose and said, "It's true; it's all true. It's even worse. I know." The witness was speaking. But when I asked her to tell us something of what she had experienced, she refused. "They won't believe me." Then she pointed to a boy who had arrived more recently than she. "Let Braun tell; he knows even more." But Braun sat silent. He also felt the wall of skepticism.

Not that these children have forgotten! One of the subjects for composition on a mid-term examination happened to be "Far Away and Long Ago." Usually this topic is chosen by romantic girls who spin some kind of childhood fairy tale. It generally evokes the most innocuous response. I was astonished to see how many of the refugees selected the theme. But in their compositions there was nothing idyllic about "Far Away and Long Ago." The girl who refused to speak in class wrote three times the required number of words, relating what she had endured in Vienna. Another girl described her escape through the woods with her mother. And each composition closed with a veritable paean of love for America, for democracy, for all those principles of equality which seem so trite to our students. The witnesses remembered all too well. Their silence was caused by the general disbelief. Being victims, they felt themselves to be suspect, and their narrative invalidated. Yet who better than these boys and girls could, through their testimony, transform the meaning of democracy into a living glory instead of a routine phrase, and the monstrosity of fascism into a reality instead of a fable?

In a more courageous psychological at-

GOEBBELS' FAVORITE WEAPON

mosphere these pupils would have been vocal. It is part of our failure to conceive the problem adequately that they should fear mistrust—that they should be on the defensive, rather than in their natural role of accuser against the common foe.

Even those Americans who are little troubled by the welfare of the Jews or other “minority” groups in our country have good cause to be alarmed by the branching out of the Hitler campaign of demoralization. The only ones who can afford to view this aspect of the Nazi offensive against the home front complacently are those who want a Nazi victory, or are anxious for a native brand of fascism to replace our institutions. The Hitler technique of disruption carefully follows every possible pattern of ethnic, religious, or political division in the country, but in no direction is it as intensively applied as in regard to the Jewish group. If the Nazis, after a decade of experience, find it worth their while to continue to stress this particular angle of attack above all others, by the same token it should be worth our while to stress the counter-attack. That seems to be elementary good sense.

The schools are daily urged by every government agency to take an adequate part in preparing the youth of the country to withstand, physically and spiritually, the trials before them. In a large measure, they are reasonably successful. Pre-induction courses are given whose chief intent is to prepare boys of pre-draft age for better service in our armed forces. But there are urgent and grave issues at which we still continue to blink. If we know

that certain conditions exist, that there are spots of decay in the organism, nothing is achieved by letting them fester. A straightforward cleansing is far the more hygienic course.

As far as the schools are concerned, the usual methods of fostering goodwill and seeking to break down prejudices by developing “tolerance”—that much abused word—are not enough. The times are critical. The long-range program must be supplemented by a more immediate reaction to a present danger. I do not say that we must create artificial situations, and suddenly treat our students to dissertations on these problems. Unfortunately, however, the situations create themselves. In view of this, when the occasion presents itself, an honest analysis of the purpose of the enemy becomes as legitimate, as pedagogically sound, and as essential as a course in First Aid or nutrition. Once one has lifted the subject out of the melancholy sphere of apologetics or homiletics, and placed such phenomena as the anti-Semitic parodies in their true perspective, the boy who is going to an Army camp at the end of the term will have some defense against this type of attempt to undermine his morale. The schools must assist in providing this safeguard so that the will to victory does not sicken at the source.

Marie Syrkin has appeared frequently in COMMON GROUND. Her “The Case of Jacob Goldstein” in the Winter 1943 issue discussed another phase of anti-Semitism, the attempt to dehumanize the Jew and substitute the tribal symbol for the individual.

THIS MY BROTHER

VIVA HILL

*Quote me no bold figures
As testimony to the lie we perpetrate daily.
Give me no lists of indigestible facts.*

*Rather let me take my text
From the face of a child
Old too early, dark too nearly
To be held a part of this his native land,
Too hungry to become a man.*

*We offer sustenance to the world,
And provide him with a crust.
To comfort his spirit, of a Sunday
We adjure him, "the loaf will not suffice."
We quench his thirst with water from stagnant pools
And wonder that he ceases to drink.
We hold a torch in a darkened world—
So other children may walk in nakedness beside this one?
His eyes, sick with watching misery,
Plead with us to remove the wall
And set him free.
We assure him there is no wall.*

*His father died with ours—
That the child
Having had the bad grace to be born,
Might live, at liberty to starve to death
And seek what happiness he will in the hereafter?*

*Look, if you can, into his face
And tell this child that he is the evidence
We give mankind
Of our good faith.*

LABOR LENGTHENS ITS PERSPECTIVES

MONROE SWEETLAND

NINE CIO and AFL workers finished their day's job in one of Detroit's airplane plants one evening last month. As they left their machines, they were handed small blue cards by union shop-stewards. They scrawled their names on the cards and left for home.

That same night, nearly 7,000 miles away in blacked-out Shanghai, several cautious figures stole out of a darkened house and moved furtively northward through the city's suburbs. Clinging to the macabre shadows cast by bomb-ruined buildings, the little group made its way silently past Japanese sentry posts, circled roving patrols of military police and, at dawn, finally trudged out into open country.

Two days later they turned southeastward. Sleeping by day, tramping across abandoned fields and along weed-grown farm roads at night, they emerged in another five days at a tiny fishing village on the China coast. There were whispered consultations in a rear room of a waterfront store. Some money was exchanged, and late that night six men stole out to a weather-worn sampan riding the slow swells of the inlet.

Two months later, three of the boat's six passengers, each a skilled machinist, were operating old-fashioned turret lathes in one of Free China's busiest munitions factories. A fourth, an electrical technician, was repairing airplane ignition systems. Farther north, the fifth, a construction expert, was assisting in the erection of a new steel fabricating plant; while the sixth was helping lay down new supply

routes and new railroad spurs in Chungking.

There was an intimate connection between these two events, 7,000 miles apart, and behind it lies the story of one of the most daring projects ever undertaken by American labor.

The nine Detroiters and hundreds of other unionists who signed similar small blue cards that night have become partners in one of the most astonishing smuggling plots in history—a plot whose effect is already being felt in Chungking, and—far more disconcertingly—in Tokio.

The nine signed cards were pledges that each man would contribute one hour's pay per month to the war relief work supported by America's powerful CIO and AFL unions.

The project to smuggle skilled Chinese labor from occupied to Free China was first proposed to American labor by the Chinese Association of Labor. At one time or another during China's six-year struggle against its invaders, many thousands of expert machinists and production experts have been trapped behind Japanese lines. Many skilled Chinese mechanics, it was pointed out, have been forced or persuaded to work in Japanese-controlled factories in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Burma, and the Dutch East Indies. At the same time, there is a dearth of skilled workers in Free China's war industries. The transfer of these expert workers into Free China, it was argued, would not only increase the potential of Chinese production and promote the United Nations' war

COMMON GROUND

effort, but would also withdraw a corresponding quantity of the most valuable manpower from Japanese war production.

Convinced of both the importance and feasibility of the idea, the CIO and AFL War Relief Committees early this year appropriated \$216,000 for the operation of this streamlined underground railway.

But, arresting to the imagination as this project is, it represents only a small item in the huge war relief programs undertaken for the first time last year by American trade unions.

II

Long before Pearl Harbor, American trade unions saw the earth's surface constricting under the foreshadowed shape of the coming global war. Fascism's rape of Republican Spain, Italy's brutal conquest of Ethiopia, Hitler's march into Austria and Czechoslovakia—these were ominous portents to American labor, though other sections of the public were lulled into quietude and hope by Chamberlain and Munich.

In fascism's every move toward world conquest, starting with Mussolini's march on Rome in 1922, labor observed the trade unions among the first victims of oppression, for democratic organizations of workers in their own groups were, of course, deadly enemies of an anti-democratic state. As the great trade unions of Germany, Austria, France, Norway, and a half-dozen other nations were systematically destroyed, their leaders murdered, their funds confiscated, American unionists saw the vestiges of any hoped-for isolationism dissipated. Each day's headlines generated a deeper feeling of international solidarity with the workers of Europe's devastated nations.

Adding to this understandable emotional swell was the fact that hundreds of thousands of American trade unionists are first- and second-generation Americans.

There still exist for them profound cultural ties, emotional and language affiliations with their homelands, with brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers who are trapped behind the lines of totalitarian terror. Today, first- and second-generation Americans see their sons marching off to war on a more particular mission than do other American parents. They see their men almost as crusaders, bringing to the rest of the world, to their homelands, the democracy and opportunity they have enjoyed here. Even before the American labor movement "organized" its giving, thousands of trade union men and women had given more than \$5,000,000 to the numerous relief agencies that ministered to Spain, China, Austria, and Ethiopia.

Now that labor has organized its relief program the CIO and AFL together have already raised approximately \$30,000,000 for relief purposes at home and abroad from their 12,000,000 members. Both groups are full participating agencies in the National War Fund, established this year to administer the work of 19 national fund-raising organizations and to combine all war appeals (save the Red Cross) into a single unified campaign. Through their own two agencies—the National CIO Committee for American and Allied War Relief and the United Nations Relief of the AFL—organized workers throughout the United States now contribute to local Community War Chests, to the beneficiary welfare agencies, the USO, British, Russian, and Chinese relief, and a dozen other charitable and war relief organizations.

What is perhaps most significant in labor's first comprehensive venture into group philanthropy is that in this civic participation trade unions have lengthened their perspective beyond the traditionally limited functions of immediate economic concerns. Future labor his-

LABOR LENGTHENS ITS PERSPECTIVES

torians may find that this break with established trade union attitudes and conventions represents a much more important turning point in organized labor's relations with the rest of the public than is now suspected. For, inevitably, labor's stature and prestige, both nationally and locally, have grown as it has assumed increasingly larger shares of public responsibility in the past two years. Today trade unions are a more integral part of community life than ever before in American history.

Behind this emergence of organized labor as philanthropist is the story of a radical shift in the philosophy and policies of charitable fund raising. Hardly more than a decade ago both community and national fund-raising campaigns placed their major emphasis on large contributions from wealthy individuals or corporations. Small gifts from workingmen and low income families were regarded as an inconsequential source of revenue, and for the most part ignored. It was the traditional eleemosynary attitude—the privileged and wealthy bestowing largesse on the underprivileged and poor. Even as late as 1923, an estimated 10 per cent of the population was responsible for 90 per cent of all charitable benefactions.

Gradually, however, shifts in income distribution and the falling off of large bequests forced a re-thinking of basic approaches. It was recognized, at length, that not only was there a large section of the community that remained an untapped source of income, but also that the old policies were something less than democratic in operation. Boards of directors of welfare agencies and community chest organizations were largely composed of bankers, corporation executives, and other pillars of the upper stratum. Labor had little or no voice in the disposition of social service and charitable funds to which it was asked to contribute. This, in

turn, naturally tended to vitiate labor's interest in giving.

Today, the vast change that has been effected in the social bases of giving is startlingly evident. The experience of scores of cities in recent years attests the indispensability of organized labor's partnership in any determined effort to achieve either Red Cross or Community Chest goals. What this has meant, in a very short time, to the administration and direction of civic charities is also highly revealing. Last year the cio was able to count no more than 90 of its representatives on Community Chest and Red Cross boards of directors. This year there are more than 1,200.

Recent Community Chest reports from five major industrial cities reveal the magnitude of organized labor's contributions. In Detroit and Pittsburgh the cio and AFL alone were responsible for 20 per cent of the total amounts raised. The cio's contribution in Detroit was \$1,302,630; the city's goal, \$7,075,186. In Milwaukee, the AFL and cio raised more than 20 per cent of the city's \$2,667,803 fund. cio contributions to the Baltimore War Chest amounted to \$358,673—or 16 per cent of the total.

Red Cross reports for 1943 tell a similar story of labor's growing civic participation. In Milwaukee the cio raised \$171,127 for the Red Cross or 11.6 per cent of the total obtained in the city. In Baltimore it contributed \$228,733—nearly 19 per cent.

War Chest pledges in Minneapolis for 1943 tell an impressive story. In 1942 the AFL and cio reported 42,140 pledges for a total of \$154,354; in 1943, 51,179 pledges for a total of \$295,627.

Imposing as these figures may well be, it is important to realize they represent only two sections of organized labor, the cio and AFL. The contributions by mem-

COMMON GROUND

bers of the large independent Railroad Brotherhoods, Miners, Typographical Unions, and other unaffiliated groups swell the final totals considerably.

In comparison with the success of Red Cross and War Chest drives in cities where labor has been welcomed as a partner, labor leaders point to the experiences of several communities where labor's offer of co-operation has been rejected. Two years ago, the cio's proposal for a combined effort was refused by Community Chest officials in a highly industrialized southern city where the cio had more than 300,000 members. At the conclusion of the campaign, a single \$5 gift was the only traceable contribution from the cio. As one New York City newspaper put it, "The moral seems to be you can't slap a man's face and get him to open his pocketbook simultaneously."

In Madison, Wisconsin, however, with labor participating actively for the first time, the city's War Chest raised more than four times the amount obtained by the Community Chest the previous year—a gain of 311 per cent! How much of this increase, it may be asked, was directly due to labor's participation? In a single Madison plant, 494 employees gave \$745 in 1941; in 1942, 1,098 workers dug into their pockets to the tune of \$40,000—an average of more than \$36 per individual.

Greater Boston's United War Fund this month revealed a similarly interesting tabulation. Company donations in cio plants amounted to \$79,800 in 1942; in 1943, to \$86,000, or an increase of 3.6 per cent. cio membership's donations in 1942 were \$64,232; this year, incomplete totals have reached \$93,332, an increase already of more than 45 per cent. And so it has gone in other cities. AFL members in Springfield, Illinois, contributed \$7,000 in 1941 and tripled that in 1942; cio members gave \$2,000 in 1941 and \$14,393 in 1942. Six thousand employees

in a Syracuse, New York, steel plant gave \$800 in 1940, \$1,500 in 1941, and \$40,000 in 1942. Reports completed just last month show that cio members in Akron, Ohio, gave \$335,000 to the city's War Chest, or 27.6 per cent of the total contributed; in Jackson, Michigan, 24.8 per cent of the total; in Gary, Indiana, 25.4 per cent; in Erie, Pennsylvania, more than 21 per cent; in Detroit, 18.4 per cent.

The total war relief contributions from organized labor amounted last year to an estimated \$30,000,000. This fiscal year it is expected to be doubled. cio contributions to the Red Cross alone have already reached \$7,000,000 in 1943.

Slightly more than 15 per cent of all Community Chest money raised for 1942 came from gifts averaging below \$5. Twenty-four per cent came from donations of less than \$10. Clearly, here is an indication of wide involvement of all sections of the population in community life—in short, a growing democratization of the large city and small town.

III

Labor's approach to its new job of fund raising has been characterized by three outstanding features, two of them dealing with method and technique, the third with practical consequences.

First, since it is labor's experience that workers frequently find it impossible to make lump-sum contributions, it has advanced a plan whereby workers voluntarily request their employers to deduct one hour's pay a month to be turned over to the Community War Chest or to the Red Cross (the only major agency which continues to conduct an independent drive). More than 35 per cent of the cio's 5,500,000 members are now contributing under the hour-a-month payroll deduction plan. Where employers have occasionally refused to co-operate with unions on this plan, it has been chiefly because

LABOR LENGTHENS ITS PERSPECTIVES

they feared a later request for a check-off of union dues—frequently a basic feature of the closed shop. But even this bugaboo has failed to be a serious deterrent. The simple efficiency of the deduction formula has been proved in Detroit where a single CIO local alone contributes \$400,000 a year by this automatic and relatively painless method. As with union dues, the check-off system obviates the normal incidence of forgetfulness and temporary financial disability.

A second feature is the attractive appeal of "giving once—for all." During the last war, and indeed until fairly recent years, virtually dozens of war relief and charitable organizations held their own drives, promoted tag days, conducted special campaigns. Frequently the worker would find himself solicited for ten or more contributions a year. The war brought literally hundreds of new appeals, and a single unified over-all campaign became more and more a crying need. Under the leadership of the national Community Chests and Councils, 400 cities formed "war chests."

A presidential executive order on January 12, 1943, established the National War Fund as the top correlating agency of all war and Community Chest appeals. Three representatives each from the AFL and CIO were named to its national board of directors: President Philip Murray, Irving Abramson, and Sidney Hillman for the CIO; President William Green, Matthew Woll, and David Dubinsky for the AFL. One representative each from the independent Railroad Brotherhoods, the Mine Workers, the Farmers Union, and Negro organizations was appointed to complete the labor members of the board. Instead of reverting to the outmoded system of multiple solicitations, the War Fund recommended, with labor's hearty approval, a single pledge covering 19 agencies, including the huge

USO, and ranging from British, Russian, Polish, and Greek war relief to the American Social Hygiene Association and YMCA Prisoners Aid Committee. At the same time, the National War Fund and the American Red Cross urged that local War Chests and Red Cross chapters give official recognition to the CIO and AFL and provide for labor representation on boards of directors, budget and campaign committees.

A third aspect of labor's new venture into group giving has drawn the attention of public officials and labor leaders who are particularly eager to see a re-establishment of labor unity. More than any other common undertaking since the division in trade union ranks in 1935, joint participation in Red Cross and War Chest work has brought the CIO and AFL into close practical harmony. True, in many cities active collaboration has been achieved in War Bond drives, but this has seldom required the rapprochement and day-to-day understandings involved in sustained work with social agencies in the community. Nationally and locally, the methods and policies of the two groups are parallel and occasionally one has spoken for the other in negotiations with local Red Cross and War Chest organizations.

In cities where local War Chests exist, the CIO National Committee and the United Nations Relief devote their full efforts to swinging the maximum financial response from the AFL and CIO memberships. Where there are no War Chests, as in New York City, labor has initiated its own joint campaign, transmitting the money raised directly to the national war relief agencies.

The war has brought to American labor an intensified feeling of kinship for the hard-pressed soldiers and civilian populations among our United Nations allies. Accordingly, by mutual agreement be-

COMMON GROUND

tween the labor groups and the National War Fund, \$2,000,000 was set aside to be allocated in three equal portions for special labor projects, in England, China, and Russia. China's \$660,000 it was decided, will be split three ways: \$216,000 for the smuggling of skilled workers from occupied to Free China; \$250,000 for medical aid, and \$200,000 for mobile food distribution to workers on war projects. Britain's portion will provide \$200,000 for merchant seamen's clubs, \$250,000 for homes for war orphans and bomb-shocked children, and \$116,000 for rest homes for war workers. The Russian relief project allots \$409,000 for equipping schools and nurseries for homeless children, and \$275,000 for rehabilitation hospitals for wounded soldiers.

These have become labor's own special undertakings, but as the war relief program developed, the cio and AFL found themselves essaying a variety of smaller projects that sprang indirectly from the major job of fund raising. Participation in the nationwide Victory Book Campaign was one of these. More than 200,000 books of every kind were collected by local trade unions and turned over to Army camp libraries and USO centers. Loans to financially distressed families of missing merchant seamen were made early this year by the cio's War Relief Committee. Almost 200,000 copies of a pocket-size servicemen's manual, containing legal, welfare, and military information, compiled and printed by the cio, have also been distributed to men in the armed forces and their families.

Other appeals turned the labor groups into new and unexpected fields. Furnishing "day rooms" and recreational centers in Army camps began almost accidentally. War Department regulations provide for the establishment of day rooms in every large camp but no Fed-

eral funds are provided to equip them. Through the National War Relief Committee, local unions have transformed bare day rooms in several Army camps into comfortable, attractively furnished club rooms with pianos, tables, chairs, radios, davenport, drapes, and even collections of musical instruments.

IV

Labor's enthusiasm for its new venture into organized war relief is evidenced in the numerous spontaneous activities initiated by local unions to swell their contributions. Trade unionists in Forest Grove, Oregon, last month obtained permission from a large lumber company to collect old scrap metal lying around abandoned timber operations. The collection netted two large carloads of scrap, which were sold directly to Bethlehem Steel for \$715. Of this amount, County Civilian Defense was voted \$71, the March of Dimes Fund \$50, the Salvation Army \$50, and the cio War Relief Committee \$544.

Nor will unionists be easily discouraged when employers refuse to co-operate in promoting worthy charitable appeals. The managements of three large plants in a southern mill town recently refused to permit voluntary payroll deductions for the Red Cross. Labor leaders heading the drive put their heads together with Red Cross officials. On the following pay day there were Red Cross booths at the factory gates. The Red Cross provided money with which to cash the workers' checks and then and there subtracted the amount of contribution each worker wished to make. Many a dollar that would not otherwise have found its way into Red Cross coffers was collected at the gate that day.

There is good reason to believe that labor's increasing participation in war and community relief activities is only

LABOR LENGTHENS ITS PERSPECTIVES

the beginning of a trend that will bring trade unionism a deeper integration in the pattern of American social life. As greater numbers of labor representatives begin to appear on the boards of directors and committees of both the Community Chest and Red Cross, it is inevitable that trade unionists will obtain representation in other welfare and social planning agencies. In Detroit, for instance, where nearly all the money contributed to the metropolitan War Chest from the Willow Run area came from the cio United Auto Workers, after 51 per cent of the total money raised had been allocated to the National War Fund, the remainder was assigned to local social services with the approval of union officials. The Auto Local's representative was subsequently named to a Community Council committee of seven, which created subcommittees on public health, housing, child welfare, and recreation. Detroit unionists, therefore, now have a voice in community planning and in the administration of local social services.

In more than 400 communities, organized labor this year has for the first time obtained influence on important Community Chest and civic committees. As this participation in social and civic planning becomes stronger, labor's financial support is almost certain to increase accordingly. Labor sees this expanding role for its membership as a virtual certainty. That is one of the reasons it has raised its sights to the astonishing goal of \$100,000,000 as its contribution to the nation's war relief program during the next two years.

Here is evidence of labor's coming of age, of the lengthening of its perspectives. It has recognized community responsibility and accepted it. At first, perhaps, its motives were impelled by simple humanitarian considerations. Now, however, labor sees not only an opportunity to par-

ticipate at the peace table, but also to serve as a determining factor in postwar rehabilitation. Trade unionism views the opportunity not simply in terms of its capacity to give money, but also in its ability to provide people from its own ranks to help in the operation of the relief programs. Scores of cio and AFL unions, for instance, have large Polish, Italian, Jewish, and German-language groups in their memberships. In many of these are experienced leaders with active connections with the underground trade union movements in Europe now.

Labor's new relief role, then, will not end with the end of the war. Not only does it expect to participate in the huge work of rehabilitating a socially and economically devastated world, but also to expand its influence in the organization and administration of social services in every large industrial community at home.

It is logical that this be so. Labor has a tremendous investment in the postwar world. And American democracy has likewise a great investment in the powerful democratic organizations of its workmen and women. The preservation of the democratic way of life, threatened by a fascist victory or a postwar collapse, demands a closer knitting together of all elements of the American community and closer kinship and fellow-feeling between the American people and the men and women waging the fight for freedom all over the world.

Monroe Sweetland is national director of the National CIO War Relief Committee. After serving for several years as executive secretary of the Oregon Commonwealth Federation, he was called to Washington as a special labor adviser in the Labor Division of the OPM, predecessor of the War Production Board.

THAT I HAD THE WINGS

RALPH ELLISON

RILEY stared into the peach tree, his eyes wide with excitement. Right there, straight up where the pink blossoms had burst the sticky buds, a mama robin-red-breast was teaching a little robin how to fly. First the mama bird would fly a piece and chirp to the young bird to follow her. But the little bird wouldn't move. Then the mama bird would fly back and peck the young one and circle around and try to push it off the branch and the little bird held on, afraid.

Shoots, why don't yuh go on an try it, thought Riley. Go on, lil bird. Don't be scaird. But the little robin just sat there, fanning its wings and cheeping. Then Riley saw the old robin fly off into a nearby tree. See there, she done gone an got mad with yuh, he thought. Shoots, I bet I could make yuh fly. He started to lie back on the porch beside Buster, when suddenly he saw the young robin flutter its ragged wings and leap. His breath tensed. The bird struggled in the air, fluttering, falling, down; beating its wings wildly against the earth. He started up. But there it was, trying to rise and fly awkwardly, up to where the mama bird chattered in the tree.

Riley sat back. He felt good. "Yuh had me fooled," he whispered to the young robin. "Yuh wuzn't really scaird. Yuh jus didn't want no ole folks messin with yuh." He felt very good. Suddenly he tensed. I'm gon get me a bird an teach him how to fly, he decided. Then as he turned to wake Buster and tell him, Buster stirred and opened his eyes.

"Man, less do something," said Buster

in his husky voice. "How come yuh cain go nowhere?"

Riley's spirits sagged. He had forgotten. "Aw, cause somebody tole about us gittin after them bad-luck church house squabs, and Ma tole Aunt Kate to keep me in the yard."

"Hecks, them pigeons don't belong to the church," said Buster. "They jus lives there. Don't nobody own 'em. I wish I had me some a that good ole flyin meat right now!"

Riley looked for the robin, seeing it flutter into a distant tree, and was filled with a strange loneliness. If I didn't have to stay here, he thought, we could go find us a bird.

Buster stood. "I guess I be seein yuh, man. I feels like doin somethin."

"Aw, don't go," pleaded Riley. "We kin fin somethin to do. . . . Say!" he challenged with sudden inspiration. "I bet yuh don't know this verse!"

"Which'un?"

"This'un:

*If I was the President
Of these United States
Said if I was the President
Of these United States
I'd eat good chocolate candy bars
An swing on the White House gates—
Great—God-a-mighty, man—
I'd swing on them White House gates!"*

"Yuh Riley!!!"

His mouth fell open. Aunt Kate stood in the shadow of the doorway, her wrinkled face quivering with rage.

THAT I HAD THE WINGS

"Ah heahed yuh, suh! Ah heahed yuh takin the Lawd's name in vain!"

He scrambled to his feet, speechless.

"An yuh wuz talkin bout bein the President! Yuh know yo ma's done taught yuh better'n that! Yuh better min', suh, befo yuh git everybody into trouble. Whut yuh think would happen to yo po ma if the white folks wuz to hear she wuz raisin up a black chile whuts got no better sense than to talk bout bein President?"

"It wuz jus a verse," stammered Riley. "I didn't mean no harm."

"Yass, but it wuz a sinful verse! The Lawd don't like it an the white folks wouldn't neither."

Catching a glimpse of the young robin flying into a farther tree, he made himself look meek. "I'm sorry, Aunt Kate."

Her face softened. "Yuh chillun havta learn how to live right while yuh young, so's yuh kin have some peace when yuh



gits grown. Else yuh be buttin yo head ginst a col' white wall all yo born days. Ahm ole as Ah is today jus cause Ah didn't let them kinda sinful thoughts worry ma min'." She pursed her lips in proud conviction.

Riley looked at her from under lowered lids. It was always God, or the white

folks. She always made him feel guilty, as though he had done something wrong he could never remember, for which he would never be forgiven. Like when white folks stared at you on the street. Suddenly Aunt Kate's face changed from dark anger to intense sweetness, making him wary and confused.

"Yuh chillun needs to learn some a the Lawd's songs," she beamed, singing:

*Sing aaa-ho that
Ah had the wings of-vah dove
Ah'd fly to mah Jesus an
Be at res'. . . .*

"Thass the kinda song fo yuh chillun to sing. Yuh needs the wings of the spirit to help yuh through this worl'. Lemme heah yuh try it erlong with me."

Sing aaa-ho that—

Riley's throat was dry. The little robin was winging itself out of sight now. He looked helplessly at Buster. Buster looked away. Aunt Kate paused, her face clouding.

"I-I-I guess I don't feel . . . like . . . singin jus now, Aunt Kate," he said fearfully.

"So now yuh don't feel like it!" she exploded. "If I wuz teachin yuh some a that devil's trash yuh wuz singin, yuh'd feel like it though!"

"B-b-but it wuzn't no bad song."

"Hush that 'sputin mah word! Ah kin see that the devil's gon git yuh, suh! Jus git on to the back an outa mah sight!"

He started slowly.

"Git suh! Yuh nasty stinkin imp-a-satan! Yuh jus mark mah word. Befo the day's gone, yuh gon git into some sorta trouble an Ahm gon have yo ma beat the fear a God into yuh!"

He went, stepping slowly off the porch, and entered the shadow between the two houses.

"I'd sho hate to have her put her mouth on me like that," whispered Bus-

COMMON GROUND

ter. "Man, they say ole folks like that kin put a terrible jinx on yuh!"

Riley leaned against the house. That wuzn't no bad verse; it was a funny one. He'd put in the "great-God-a-mighty" part himself, to make it sound better. Shucks! Aunt Kate sho wuz a puzzle—maybe she wuz too ole to understand a man—born way back in slavery times. All she knows is go to church every night and read the Bible and mess with him while Ma was working for the white folks during the day. She's crazy. That ole song: *Sing a-ho if I had the wings of a dove. . . . Ain't no fun singin that ole song.*

Suddenly a grin bloomed on his face.

"Hey, Buster," he whispered.

"Whut?"

He sang huskily:

*If I had the wings of a dove, Aunt Kate,
I'd eat up all the candy, Lawd,
An tear down the White House
gate. . . .*

Buster stuck out his lower lip and frowned. "Fool, yuh better stop that makin fun a that church song. Aunt Kate said it was a sin."

Riley's laughter wavered. Maybe God would punish him. He bit his lip. But the words kept dancing in his mind. Lots of verses. *Amazin grace, how sweet the sound. A bullfrog slapped his granma down.* He felt the suppressed laughter clicking and rolling within him, like big blue marbles. That "amazin grace" part was from a church song too. Maybe he would really be punished now. But he could suppress it no longer and leaned against the house and laughed.

"Yuh jus keep on laughin at that church song an I'm gonna go fin' me some other guys to play with," warned Buster.

"Aw, I wuzn't laughin at that," he lied.

"Then whut wuz yuh laughin at?"

"About . . . about yesterday when I fell off the church house. . . ."

"When we wuz after that flyin meat?"
"Yeah."

"Fool, that wuzn't funny. Yuh wuz cryin up a breeze. Ain't yo head still sore?"

He felt his head. "Just a little," he said.

"I bet yuh was really scaird," said Buster.

"The heck I wuz. I felt pretty good."

"Boy, yuh quit that lyin, yuh wuz cryin like a baby!"

"Shucks, I'm talkin bout when I wuz fallin. I cried cause I hit my head."

"Yuh jus tryin to fool me," said Buster. "Yuh like to busted yo brains out."

"Hones', man. Thass how come them white guys like to jump outa them airplanes in them parachutes."

"Yeah, but yuh didn't have no parachute," laughed Buster.

Riley walked toward where a shaft of sunlight broke the shadow at the back of the house. "Man, yuh don't know nothin," he said. "Les go look at the new baby chicks."

They came to the chicken fence and swayed gently against it, looking through. Bits of grain and droppings were scattered about, and the hard earth was marked with strange designs where the chickens had scratched. The chickens eyed them expectantly.

Riley pointed to a brood of downy baby chicks scurrying about an old white hen.

"There's the lil biddies," he cried.

"They cute, ain't they, man?"

"They sho is!" Buster's eyes gleamed with pleasure.

"An lissen to all that fuss them lil guys is makin."

"Shucks, man, they cryin. Most everything whut's little cries, like my baby brother, Bubber."

"Ma cries when she's in church," said Riley, "an she ain't little."

"Aw, thass when she's shoutin, man."

"I don't like nothin like that," said Riley. "How come they have to shout?"

THAT I HAD THE WINGS

"Cause they feels the *spirit*. Thass why."

"Well, whut's the *spirit*?"

"Fool, thass the Holy Ghost! Yuh been to Sunday school."

Riley wiggled his toes through the wire.

"Well, all I know is the Holy Ghost sho mus hurt bad, cause everybody gits to cryin and cuttin the fool," he said finally.

"Ma says when they crys is when they feelin good," said Buster.

"Well, feelin good or no feelin good, when I see Ma cryin an goin on like that I feel so shame I could hide my face," he said tightly. "I don't like nothin yuh have to cry over before yuh kin feel good."

He saw two young cockerels plunging headlong across the yard, flapping their stubby wings and squawking.

"Chickens is crazy!" cried Buster. "Jus look at them two fool roosters goin yonder!"

Riley dismissed them with a scornful wave of his palm. "Them ain't no roosters, man. There's a *real* rooster over yonder," he said pointing.

"Good-God-a-mighty! That mus be the boss rooster!"

"He is. Name's Ole Bill."

"Ole Bill!"

"Man, an he can whip anything whut wears feathers," bragged Riley.

Buster whistled in admiration. The silky sheen of the rooster's red and dark green plumage rippled in the sun. Ole Bill clucked to the hens and strutted, his red comb swaying in proud dignity.

"Jus look at that fool," exclaimed Buster, "lifting his feet up and down like a big fat preacher."

"An look at his spurs," cried Riley. "Look at his spurs!"

"Doggone! Them hens better watch that fool!"

"He can fight with 'em too, man. When he gits them spurs into another

chicken, he jus rides right on to the promise' lan'."

Ole Bill clucked softly and the hens scurried to where he scratched.

"Man, man! He's the fightin'est, crowin'est rooster in the whole wide world!"

Suddenly the rooster flapped his wings and crowed, his chest swelling and his neck arching forward with the sound.

"Lissen to that son-of-a-gun!"

"Aaaaw, sing it, Bill!"

"Man, thass lil Gabriell!"

"Shucks, he's the Louie Armstrong of the chickens!"

"Blowing his golden trumpet, Lawd. . . ."

"An tellin all the roosters they better be good. . . ."

"Cause he won't stan for no foolishness. . . ."

"Ole Bill says, Tell all the dogs, an tell all the cats, they better be good or go join the bats," rhymed Riley, "cause the mighty Ole Bill's in town."

"Naw, naw, man. He's the Louie Armstrong of the chickens playin *Hold That Tiger*. . . ."

"Yeah, telling that tiger not to act no fool. . . ."

"Thass it, hittin high p. . . ."

"Boy, ain't no p on no horn. It's do re me," sang Riley.

"Yeah 'tis. When Louie plays it, 'tis. It's do re me fa sol la ti an p too!"

They bent double with laughter. Ole Bill arched his neck and swallowed, his sharp bill parting like the curved blades of a pair of scissors.

Riley became sober. "My ole man is really proud of that there rooster," he said. "If yuh want to make him mad, jus tell him Ole Bill got run over. Corse, I don't blame him; cause if I wuz to die and come back a bird like Aunt Kate says folks do, I'd want to be just like Ole Bill."

"Not me," said Buster. "I wouldn't want to come back no rooster."

COMMON GROUND

"How come? Ole Bill's good lookin an he can fight like Joe Louis!"

"Shucks, but he cain fly!"

"The heck he cain fly!"

"Cain no roosters fly!"

"I kin prove it!"

"Yuh crazy, Riley. How yuh gon prove a rooster kin fly?"

"Easy. I'll git up on top of the chicken house and yuh han' Ole Bill up to me—"

"Aw, naw," said Buster. "Aw, naw. I ain't goin in there with all them spurs."

Riley spat in disgust. "Yuh make me sick."

"Yeah? Well, I still ain't goin in there."

"Awright, yuh go up on top an I'll han' him up to yuh. o.k.?"

"o.k. I don't guess he kin spur me when he's off the ground."

Riley glanced furtively toward where Aunt Kate usually sat at the kitchen window, then entered the yard, fastening the gate behind him.

"Hurry up, man," called Buster from the roof. "It's hot up here."

"Gimme time," called Riley. "Jus gimme time."

He moved stealthily toward Ole Bill, brushing along the fence. The hens squawked. Ole Bill stepped angrily about, his head jerking rapidly.

"Yuh better watch that fool," yelled Buster.

"Who yuh tellin? COME HERE TO ME, OLE BILL!"

As he reached out, the big rooster charged, his neck feathers standing out like a ruff, his legs churning the air, spurring. Riley covered his face with his arm.

"Grab holt to him, man!"

He lunged, grabbing. The dust flew. Ole Bill struck the ground and danced away. Riley dived, seeing Ole Bill bounce away like a puffed-up feather duster.

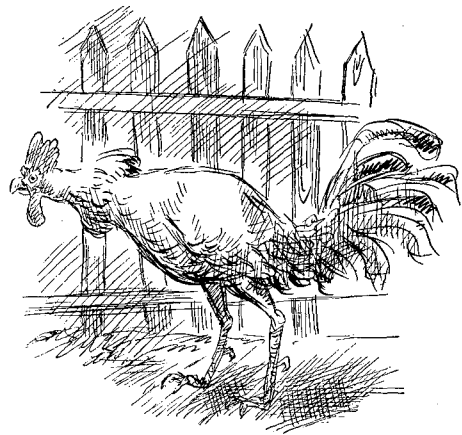
"What I tell yuh bout this fool?" he panted.

"Yuh sho didn't tell no lie—WATCH 'IM!"

The charge took him unaware. He went over fast, landing hard. He couldn't breathe. The rooster swarmed over him. He guarded his eyes. The rooster clawed his legs, pecked at his face. He felt a spur go into his shirt, the point against his ribs. Little evil yellow eyes, old like Aunt Kate's, danced sinisterly over his face. As his hand connected with a horny leg, he heard his shirt rip and held on, the pungent odor of dusty feathers hot in his nostrils. Panting, he scrambled to his feet. Ole Bill jerked powerfully, the scaly legs rough to his hands, the sharp bill stabbing.

"Hold 'im till I git down there!" yelled Buster.

"Hecks, I almost got him now," he panted. He held the rooster over his head, trying to keep his face clear of the whip-



ping wings. Suddenly he pinned the wings to Ole Bill's sides and gave a heave, his body arching backwards, sending the rooster sailing across the yard. The air filled with dust as Ole Bill skidded. Riley whirled, sneezing and running for the gate, then stopped. The rooster was shaking the dust from his feathers. Watching

THAT I HAD THE WINGS

him out of the corner of his eyes, Riley walked slowly, deliberately, so that Buster would not think he was afraid. Before him the old hen was herding her brood out of his path. Obeying a sudden impulse, he swooped up two of the chicks and stepped swiftly outside the gate.

"Fool, yuh better come on outa there," warned Buster.

"I ain't scaird like yuh," he taunted. But it was a relief to be outside.

"Take these," he called as he started to climb up to the roof.

"Whut?"

"Aw, take 'em, fraidy. These lil ones won't spur yuh."

Buster reached down and cradled the yellow chicks in his short brown fingers.

Riley leaped up, catching the slanting roof. A line of brown ants hurried nervously down the grey, sunheated boards. He hoisted himself carefully, placing his hands and knees so as not to crush the ants. Up on top he took the peeping chicks and placed them carefully inside his torn shirt. They were soft, like bolls of cotton.

"Yuh liable to smother 'em, man," said Buster.

"Naw, I won't. Sec, they ain't even cryin no more."

"They ain't, but they maw sho is. Jus lissen to her."

"Don't pay her no min'. She's always squawkin. Jus like Aunt Kate," he said.

"Lemme hol' one of them lil biddies, hear, Riley?"

Riley hesitated, then handed Buster a chick.

"If yuh wasn't so scaird, yuh could go git yuh some," he said.

"Look at him, Riley. He's scaird without his mama!"

"Yeah, yeah. Don't be fraid, lil feller," cooed Riley. "We yo friends."

"Maybe it's too hot up here. Maybe we better take 'em down," said Buster.

"Saaay! We can teach these lil son-of-a-guns to fly!"

"I never seen a lil chicken fly," said Buster skeptically.

"Well, they bout the size of a chee-chee bird," said Riley.

"But they ain't got no long wings like a chee-chee bird."

"Hecks, thass right," he said disappointedly. If they wings wuz jus a lil longer—like the lil robin's, he thought.

"Hey! Look whut mine kin do," yelled Buster.

He saw Buster place the chick on the ridge of his leg and the little chick flex its wings as it hopped off to the roof.

"He wuz tryin to fly," he yelled. "These lil guys wants to fly and they wings ain't strong enough yit!"

"Thass right," agreed Buster. "He wuz really tryin to fly!"

"I'm gon make 'em fly," said Riley.

"How, man?"

"With a parachute!"

"Shoots, ain't no parachute that little."

"Sho there is. We kin make one outta a rag and some string. Then these lil guys kin go sailing down to their ma," said Riley, making a falling leaf of his hand.

"Suppose they gits hurt and Aunt Kate tells yo mama?"

Riley looked toward the house. Aunt Kate was nowhere to be seen. He looked at the chicks.

"Aw, yuh jus scaird," he taunted Buster.

"Naw, I ain't neither. I jus don't want to see 'em hurt, thass all."

"It won't hurt 'em, man. They'll like it. All birds likes to fly, man, even chickens. Jus looka yonder!" he broke off, pointing.

A flock of pigeons circled a distant red brick chimney, dazzling the sunlight with their wings.

"Ain't that something, man?"

COMMON GROUND

"But them's pigeons, Riley. . . ."

"That ain't nothin'," said Riley, bouncing the chick gently in his palm. "We kin make 'em go sailing down and down and down and down!"

"But we ain't got no cloth," protested Buster.

Riley bent, taking the cloth where Ole Bill had torn his shirt, pulled it taut and ripped it away. He held the blue piece triumphantly before Buster's face.

"Here's the cloth, right here!"

Buster squirmed. "But we ain't got no string."

"Oh, I got string," said Riley. "I got string and everything."

He fished a ball of twine out of his pocket and held it lovingly. Yesterday he had watched the twine snap with a kite sailing high above the rooftops, and the kite had gone jerking and swooping crazily out of sight, and he had felt that same strange tightness he knew watching the birds fly south in the fall.

"Man, looka there. . . ." said Buster awfully.

A delicate curtain of flesh covered the chick's eye, making it look dead. He paused, about to tie a knot. Then the beady black eyes were open again. Sighing, he held up the cloth, seeing the strings stream lazily in the wind.

"Come on, man. We ready to make these lil ole guys fly like chee-chee birds."

He paused, looking at the circling pigeons.

"Buster, don't yuh wish somebody would teach yuh an me how to fly?"

"Well, maybe," Buster said guardedly. "I guess I would. But we needs two parachutes for these here aviators. How yuh gonna make 'em both fly with jus one?"

"Yuh jus hold 'em and watch ole papa fix it," grinned Riley.

As Buster held the chicks, Riley hitched them together with a harness of

twine, then tied them to the parachute strings.

"Now yuh jus watch," he said. He grasped the cloth in its center and raised it gently, swinging the chicks clear of the roof. They peeped excitedly. Buster grinned.

"Come on, man."

They crawled to the edge and looked down. A hen sang a lazy song. A distant rooster challenged the morning and Ole Bill screamed an answer.

"Riley. . . ." began Buster.

"Now whut's the matter?"

"Suppose ole Aunt Kate sees us?"

"Hecks, how come yuh have to start thinkin bout her? She's inside talkin to her Jesus."

"Well—" Buster said.

They sat on the edge now, their legs dangling. Riley trembled with anticipation.

"Yuh want to go down an bring 'em back?"

"That rooster's still down there, man," said Buster.

Shaking his head in mock hopelessness, Riley clambered down and entered the yard.

Ole Bill clucked a warning from a far corner.

"Less do it like they do in them airplane movies," yelled Buster. "Switch on!"

"Well, switch on then!" he yelled.

"Contact!"

"Contact! It's a non-stop flight, man."

"Well, let 'em come down!" yelled Riley impatiently.

Then he was seeing Buster tossing the chicks and parachute into the air, seeing the cloth billow out umbrella-wise as the chicks peeped excitedly underneath; seeing it sail slowly down, slowly, like fluff from a cottonwood tree.

"GIT DOWN FROM THERE, SUH!!!"

He whirled, his body tense. Aunt Kate

THAT I HAD THE WINGS

was coming across the yard. He was poised, like a needle caught between two magnets.

"Riley! Catch 'em!"

He turned, seeing the parachute deflating like a bag of wind and the chicks diving the cloth earthwards like a yellow piece of rock. He tried to run to catch the chicks and found himself standing still and hearing Buster and Aunt Kate yelling. Then he was stumbling to where the chicks lay hidden beneath the cloth. Please God, please, he breathed. But when he lifted the chicks, they made no sound and their heads wobbled lifelessly. He dropped slowly to his knees.

A shadow fell across the earth and grew. Looking around he saw two huge, black bunion-shaped shoes. It was Aunt Kate, wheezing noisily.

"Ah tole yuh suh! Ah knowed yuh'd be into trouble fore the day was done! Whut kina devilment yuh up to now?"

He swallowed, his mouth dry.

"Yuh heah me talkin to yuh, boy!"

"We wuz jus playin."

"Playin whut? Whut yuh doin in there?"

"We . . . we wuz playin flyin. . . ."

"Flyin the dickens!" she yelled suspiciously. "Lemme see under that there rag!"

"It's jus a piece a rag."

"Lemme see!"

He lifted the cloth. The chicks were heavy as lead. He closed his eyes.

"Ah knowed it! Yuh been killin off yo ma's chickens!" she shouted. "An Ahm gon tell her, sho as mah name's Kate."

He stared at her mutely.

If only he hadn't looked when she called, he might have caught the lil chicks.

Suddenly the words rushed out, scalding: "I hate yuh," he screamed. "I wish yuh had died back in slavery times. . . ."

Her face shrank, turning a dirty gray.

She was proud of being old. He felt a cold blast of fear.

"The Lawd's gonna punish yuh in hell-fire for that," she said brokenly. "Some day yuh remember them words an moan an cry."

There, she'd done put a curse on him. He felt pebbles cutting into his knees as he watched her turn and go. She padded painfully away, her head shaking indignantly, her white apron stiff over her wide, gingham-covered hips.

"These lil nineteen-hundred young uns is jus full of the devil, that whut they is," she muttered. "Jus full of the devil."

For a long time he stared vacantly at the chicks lying upon the earth strewn with the chalk-green droppings of the fowls. The old hen circled cautiously before him, pleading noisily for her children. Fighting a sense of loathing, he lifted the chicks, removed the strings, and laid them down again. . . .

For a little while they were flying. . . .

Buster looked sorrowfully through the fence. "I'm sorry, Riley," he said.

He did not answer. Suddenly aware of the foul odor of chicken dung, he stood, feeling the waxy smear upon his exposed flesh as he absently wiped his fingers.

If I jus hadn't looked at her, he thought. His eyes swam. And so great was his anguish he did not hear the swift rush of feathers nor see the brilliant flash of outspread wings as Ole Bill charged. The blow staggered him and, looking down, he saw with tear-filled eyes the bright red stream against the brown where the spur had torn his leg.

"We almost had 'em flying," said Riley. "We almost. . . ."

Ralph Ellison is the managing editor of the *Negro Quarterly*.

Ollie Harrington is the illustrator.

OUR TOWN—AN ADVENTURE IN CO-OPERATION

JUSTUS LANE

WE ARE an old town a little less than twenty miles out from Boston, a town of good traditions, of fair, rolling country with goodly white pines and elms, and only one industry. We traditionally vote the Republican ticket in State and Federal elections, but in Town affairs we now and then let a Democrat in. There is a reason for this. The old families—there are three “tribes” of them, who have been here well on toward three hundred years and have multiplied on the face of the earth—are all Republicans. They are people of calm thinking and of reasonably sedate character, if not always of money. Many of the newer families came when not too civic-minded citizens opened up land for so-called “real-estate developments,” and sold tiny lots to anybody with a few dollars who would build a shack from whatever flotsam and jetsam he could find. Most of these newer people happen to be Democrats, many of them from Boston, with names vastly different from the oldtimers. When local matters are at hand, then, we have a definite and sharp division.

One section where the newer folk live is on the banks of the lovely river that winds through our town and broadens into a small pond with noble old pines rising to the tops of the surrounding ridges. Had we had enough foresight, long since, to buy this land for public use and make a park of it, it might now be a beauty spot. Instead, as in towns the country over, it is littered with shacks and unsightliness. It

frequently has had automobile accidents. Now and then a robbery, or even a murder, is committed there, and we blossom in the headlines of the Boston papers. Then the Republicans cry, “Ichabod, Ichabod, our glory is departed!” and look askance on this Democratic “rabble.”

At Town Meetings we often have protracted struggles between the two factions. The newer citizens naturally wish to have their sections—after all, that is where they live—dowered with better streets and general improvements. The older, long-established folk wish to have whatever money is at hand spent on sections more obviously in the general eye and already in better odor. And, though both points of view are easily understandable, after a rousing annual Meeting there is too often a poorly concealed bitterness.

It is really much easier for most of us—from both factions—to love the Russians than to like each other. If Russian eyes are full of beams, they are so far away we cannot see them; but the faults of our own townspeople are glaringly clear. We even call names. “Riff-raff,” “cheap,” “dreadful,” say the oldtimers. “Stick-in-the-mud,” “the High Street crowd,” “those old mossbacks,” the newcomers retaliate. So, generally, though the women meet and amicably make garments for the Red Cross to send to Russia, and all contribute tin cans and scrap for the war effort, we thank heaven piously, when these crusades are done, that we do not have to commingle any longer.

OUR TOWN—AN ADVENTURE IN CO-OPERATION

Time and circumstances have left the baby on our doorstep. What are we going to do with it? It is our baby—there is no doubt of that. Shall we take it in and give it a home and a decent bringing up, or shall we drop it into a ditch and leave it to its fate? We really have a problem. So have other towns. We lack common ground among ourselves.

Meanwhile two things are true. First of all, the town suffers. Too many sections are frowzy, dirty, ugly: we drive quickly past them when we are bringing in guests. Our few public buildings are far from handsome; the Town Hall is, in fact, pretty dowdy and depressing. Our main business section, where the stores make a little cluster of commercial activity, is far from being filled with sweetness and light. The roadsides are untidy; far too many dooryards approach aesthetic bedlam. The second truth is that a sizable number of our local boys are fighting for freedom and a better world on widely scattered battle fronts, doubtless thinking with longing of their homes back in "the good little old town," whatever these homes may look like.

Put these two truths together, and what have you? The inescapable conviction that, if our boys go thousands of miles to fight—and perhaps die—for us, we might at least do all we can to make their town more attractive for them when they return. We might even let them know we are doing this. Perhaps a letter about it would cheer some youngster who lies wounded in a far distant Army or Navy hospital.

Now this sounds easy. Really it is not. We have very little money. Our one industry employs comparatively few. Many of us go to Boston for the day's work, and for several months of the year leave before light and return after dark. We cannot have a new Town Hall right now; we just haven't the money to build it; we have no

rich man to leave one in his honor. If we are to improve the town, we will have to do it ourselves.

When this thought finally penetrated the inner consciousness of some of us, we hung our heads in shame, and a great light followed. *Why not do it ourselves?* Look: the "river settlement," as we call the dowdy section along the river banks, is dreadful—the streets are full of holes deep enough to break an automobile spring; the "crossing dump," as we call the section around the automatic bell that warns too eager drivers on Peace Street not to try to beat the Portland express, has a lot of marsh holes that ought to be filled; I can count you off ten corners where bushes obscure the road and make driving dangerous; I can lead you to hundreds of yards of stone walls that have tumbled down along the roadsides and look as if we didn't care; I can take you to at least a half-dozen triangles where farm roads meet, triangles now unsightly but which, with a little grading, a few shrubs, and some grass seed, could show almost a miracle of transfiguration.

Would you be willing, Bob, to give a little time to help the town? Would you, Dick, between campaigns for English children, for Russia, for Poland, for China, and the rest—who, God knows, need our help—would you be willing to help the old town wash its face? Would you even go so far as to bring along some soap and a rag to wash with? Would I be willing to do this myself?

We set ourselves to thinking, and we worked out a plan.

It is not elaborate; it is not fixed and final or even as yet tried. It is merely tentative, the best we can do so far; it is not expensive; it is not exclusive. But it does have, we think, the chance of making the town over in appearance, of making ourselves better able to get along together, of

COMMON GROUND

making us prouder of the place in which we live.

Here it is—and any town can do it.

Let's have a "Schizophrenia Day"—the town's name does not sound in the least like "Schizophrenia," but we'll call it that here—once or twice a year, in spring or fall or both. Saturday would be an ideal day—since Sunday will bring rest—except that the forenoon will not be available for all. A holiday would perhaps be better. In Massachusetts we celebrate Lexington Day on April 19, and Columbus Day on October 12. Those two days would be ideal. Let's dedicate them to common effort for the good of the town. Let's all get together and with brain and brawn do whatever we can to eradicate danger and ugliness, to increase beauty, to promote peace among ourselves by getting better acquainted through co-operative work. There must be much more likeable decency in both factions than we now are aware of. Let's have a day for extracting the beams from our own eyes and looking unjaundicedly at our fellow citizens.

A few major principles must be laid down. First, we will not call in outside help we have to pay for; if there is money to spend, we will put it into a fund for a new Town Hall or something similar. Second, we will agree to carry out as well as we possibly can the program for the day as arranged by the committee, without calling each other names or looking for neglect of our own favorite projects. Third, we will agree to work peacefully and cheerfully with whoever is assigned to the same job as we are, without turning up our noses or shaking our fists. Fourth, we will, as far as is possible, try to work on that day in some section of town other than our own, on the theory that the best way to learn to like a section or a person is to do something for it or for him. And of course, though we may find ourselves

very rusty in our techniques, over and under and around all, we absolutely will be democratic and united on that day. These are a few simple principles, but they seem sound and not too difficult—if we really mean business.

Now—how shall we carry the program through? There will have to be a central committee, with of course a chairman, to make general plans for the Day. This committee must be chosen from all sections of the town, from all religions, from all backgrounds, so that Protestant and Catholic and Jew will be among the members, and Colonial and Polish and German and French and every-kind-of-blood-we-have American will be represented. This committee will make a survey of the town to see what most needs to be done—without regard to location. Suppose the committee discovers, to the best of its collective ability, that what we need more than anything else for the good of the whole town is to fill holes in the streets in the river settlement. Good—then we are committed to dig gravel on Schizophrenia Day, to drive trucks, to spread gravel in the holes, so that Mr. and Mrs. O'Flanagan and Mr. and Mrs. Skiworski and Mr. and Mrs. Buckingham and Mr. and Mrs. Levy and Mr. and Mrs. Patois will like the easier riding and their springs won't break. Or, suppose the committee thinks we should first of all cut the bushes along the highways, rake them together, and burn them. Then that is what we shall do. We'll bring our own shovels for digging the gravel, our own billhooks (if we have them) for cutting the bushes, our own rakes, our own good right arms and backs and smiles.

"Hell!" Bob objects. "I'll get my hands all blisters! I'm not used to pitching gravel into a truck all day!"

"Very likely, Bob, very likely," we reply, "but you can wear work gloves without being called a sissy, and we'll have a

OUR TOWN—AN ADVENTURE IN CO-OPERATION

First-Aid kit along with each project and group. So many of us have taken First-Aid courses that we can fix you right up."

This raises a problem. Muscles will get tired and tempers may break loose. Perhaps the man who has just bought the old Harris place and is a banker in Boston will think his back is broken by ten o'clock and want to go home. Let's use a little sense; let's not try to mend a watch with a traveling crane or repair the armor of a battleship with a pair of tweezers. Let's have assignment of workers on the basis of the adaptability of the worker to the job. And as leader of each gang let's select a man who knows how to restrain the too eager from sudden death for dear old Schizophrenia, and also how to kid along those who may be tempted to soldier on the job. There won't be much of this last, we believe, since co-operation in the plan is purely voluntary and those of us who offer will be determined to do honest work.

So we dig and cut and rake and burn. Now and then we have a "light." We swap stories and laugh as much as we can. And all the time we keep pegging away at that gravel bank or those bushes or whatever the enemy is. Now and then we have a little rest, something to drink, and maybe, if the day is hot, some salt drops and gum drops, like the men in factories. Maybe someone will bring along a jug of good old treacle, such as the oldtimers used to drink in the hayfield. The forenoon trots past, and we know that over in the river settlement the holes are filling up one by one with good gravel. Noon arrives. What then?

First of all, we are hungry—oh, are we hungry! Each will have brought along a good husky luncheon from home, and the committee has arranged to have hot coffee or cold beer brought to us. We eat—and rest; we swap experiences and get better acquainted; we find that our fellow towns-

men whom we have never known are pretty good guys.

To make the afternoon agreeable, we may be shifted to work on another project, not to wear out one set of muscles; or we may keep cheerfully at work where we are. In any event, if, out of the five hundred adult men in town, we get one hundred to work on that first Day, and if we put in, let's say, six good hours of work, the aggregate at quitting time in the afternoon will be rather considerable—and pleasing. If we use the town trucks, and perhaps some amiable citizens donate theirs for the Day, so that we have ten in all, each truck should make at least ten round trips with a full load. If we are painting the Town Hall, twenty-five of us, say, we ought to sluice it down and paint the whole interior in one Day. Fifty men energetically cutting and clearing roadsides could easily do several miles in a Day.

And where have the women been, and what doing?

I have steered shy of what they will do, for that is to me a somewhat ticklish subject. They will know—and do. Some family or families may have been unfortunate through sickness or accident; the children might be sewed for during the Day by a group such as ordinarily sews for the Red Cross. By nightfall, breeches and skirts and underclothes and whatnots should come tumbling out of the hopper. Some good woman may have been ill, with no funds to hire household help. Perhaps a group of tactful—oh, so very tactful—"ladies" could go in and sluice down the premises without offence. I leave such problems to the women. To be sure, if they get the huge dinner we men shall want, perhaps that will be all they can be expected to do. In many ways it will be the best thing of the day—this husky dinner we shall all eat in common. We have the Town Hall, the Grange Hall, the Veterans' Hall, the

COMMON GROUND

Masonic Hall, the gymnasium at the High School, and three church basements or vestries—eight places in all—where tables can be set up and dinner served. Better mix us up—Congregationalists eat in the Catholic eating place, Catholics go to the Methodist—and all of us soon will rub our eyes to discover how much alike we are. It may be a good idea to have a pretty girl at the exit of all the halls to accept any money anybody may feel like contributing. From time immemorial, a good dinner has been a marvelous rouser of generosity. That money can go for buying trees to plant on the next Day, or for starting a fund for a new Town Hall, or for what-not.

The day is over. Some tempers have been lost, but later found again. Some hands have been blistered and skinned. Some of us have worked in sections we had never visited before, and the inhabitants of those sections had never seen us before, either. The thought has been gradually creeping into our minds that what we have done is but a small fraction of what is waiting; many of us will have thought up suggestions for the program of the next Day. Good—the committee will gladly receive all such.

But is the Day done? Far from it! The evening is before us. Nothing takes away the sting from weariness so well as diversion. One sub-committee has had entertainment for the evening as its child. Remember now—no outside talent is to be hired. If anyone happens to know an opera star who will come and sing for nothing, fine. If someone is acquainted with a dramatic coach who will give services free, let the coach come! Otherwise, we will make our own entertainment. We have a Women's Chorus, trained by an able local musician. It will be ready with a brand-new program. High school students can put on a short minstrel show or a skit of some kind or an athletic performance.

Some grown-up can write a dramatic episode from the town's history and the actors can be found to present it. But wouldn't it be crude? Maybe, but what a whale of a good time we should have! With six months to prepare, the entertainment committee could easily produce a series of quite passable short performances.

How shall we see and hear? No hall is large enough for all of us. It costs money to hire a huge tent, and we have inadequate bleachers. But, after dinner, while the dishes are being washed and the tables put away, the men can stroll and smoke, or sit and smoke, and then we can gather in fewer halls, since eating takes so much more room than mere sitting. Still we cannot all be together. So then, like the entertainments of the old Morality Plays in early England, let the skits and singing and plays be given first in one hall and then in another, round the circle. Suppose we have four halls to seat everybody; then we shall have at least four different brief entertainments. At the close of each one, the performers will pile into waiting automobiles and be whisked over to the next hall, with any properties being carried by truck.

The audiences will meanwhile be singing popular songs—and patriotic—for which the business classes at the high school will have mimeographed the words. Lest this singing be a complete failure, we shall appoint a skillful leader for each hall, with a good voice. Sometime between the entertainment, some popular citizen can announce what the day has accomplished: so many street holes filled, so many hundred yards of roadside cleared and cleaned, so much stone wall laid, so many patches of triangle land headed toward beauty. Finally, perhaps, suggestions may be offered orally or jotted down and sent in to the general committee as a possible guide for the next Day.

OUR TOWN—AN ADVENTURE IN CO-OPERATION

In print like this, the project seems easy and harmonious. Actually, of course, a huge amount of work will have to be done, both beforehand and during the Day, and numerous differences of opinion smoothed out along the way. But I take my stand on this thesis, and nobody shall budge me from it until experience unhappily proves me wrong, that if we are really in earnest about doing something for the town; if we are willing to make the experiment in the light of the great American documents like the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and the others which the world does not willingly let die; then, despite all our individual meanness and littleness, despite all the lame backs and blistered hands, we shall go home after the entertainment with a feeling of real accomplishment, of real joy, of honest-to-goodness pride in

the town, and, I hope, with new friends and understanding.

I'd like to invite George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln to drive around town during the first Day, watch, listen, ask questions, make comments. My choice of companion would be Franklin, for the pungency of those comments. I'm sure all four would be delighted at what we are trying to do.

I am also convinced that by nightfall, we shall all be prouder of our town than we have ever been, and we will no longer call it Schizophrenia, but perhaps Serenity, or Fraternity.

A business man in Boston, Justus Lane is a ninth-generation American who believes in universal co-operation.

ANCIENT ADOBE SOIL

DOROTHY L. PILLSBURY

MY PEOPLE put into the Port of New York so long ago they came under sail, not by steam. They brought the family cow along and were soon thriftily peddling milk in the vicinity of what is now Battery Park. They spoke the Gaelic. Nevertheless, it has suddenly dawned on me that I am an alien in the part of my own country where I now live, New Mexico.

Mrs. Tenorio, my neighbor, explains it as she does everything these days, with three words in Spanish, "*Es la guerra*—it is the war."

We no longer have a large tourist population in Santa Fe. Only the home folks are left. We, whom Mrs. Tenorio calls Anglos, realize for the first time that we are living in a little pocket of Latin America. In the capital city of the most fantastic and "foreign" state of the Union, we Anglos are aliens.

The names of our boys with the armed forces read like a poem in Spanish:

*Archuleta, Alarid
C de Baca, Ulibarri*

Our thin telephone directory and the names of the men who hold many of our public offices repeat the same cadences:

*Vigil, Pacheco
Sosaya, Aragon
Montoya, Escudero
Quintana, Lujan*

Other spots in the Southwest have large Mexican populations, too, but in Santa Fe the Spanish Americans, as they prefer to be called, greatly outnumber the An-

glos. We find ourselves in the curious position of belonging to a racial "minority" group in what we thought was "our" country. So gradually have we absorbed the flavor and customs of our Mexican neighbors that only *la guerra* has awakened us to the fact that we have been writing a strange and significant page in American folkways.

The very houses we live in are Mexican. We live in them because they are comfortable and beautiful. They are "of the country" and have been for four hundred years. The piñon logs in our three-cornered fireplaces turn *vigaed* ceilings to mellow amber and cast lovely shadows on our plain white-washed walls. Thick walls of adobe brick give us deeply recessed windows and the good bulk of "bull-nosed" partitions.

"Why," I ask Mrs. Tenorio, "does practically every adobe house have its front door painted a bright Mexican blue?"

Mrs. Tenorio adjusts the somber folds of her *rebozo* more securely over her left shoulder. "It is the color of the Virgin" (*Verheen*, she pronounces it). "Nothing evil can ever get into a house with the door painted blue."

As I walk about our walled and narrow streets, I hear more Spanish than English. "*Mira, mira!*" the kids yell instead of "Look, look!" when a plane cuts the blue New Mexican sky. Store clerks taking a telephone order say, "*Bueno, bueno,*" instead of the eternal "Okay, okay." I pay

my taxes amid a perfect babble of Spanish, and it was only a few years ago that our courts of law were conducted in both Spanish and English.

"You speak the Spanish very nice," lies Mrs. Tenorio politely. "Only it sounds a little old-fashioned, like the Spanish of my *prima*—cousin—who lives back in the *montañas*."

Can it be that the *prima* lives in one of those forgotten New Mexican villages where American citizens speak the 17th century Spanish of Cervantes?

"Si," agrees Mrs. Tenorio easily. "It is hard for an Anglo to realize, but in the village of my *prima* there is not a telephone nor a post office, and the old battery radios they have give the talking in English which no one understands. That is why we worried about the three big boys of my *prima*. Comes the time to sign the paper for the draft. At last my Manuel can endure it no longer. He borrows a horse and rides all day back into the *montañas* to the village of my *prima*."

Mrs. Tenorio puts a fold of the black *rebozo* over her mouth as she always does when she waxes confidential. "It was just as my Manuel feared," she whispered. "Those boys of my *prima* had not only not signed the paper for the draft, but—they didn't even know there was a *guerra*! *Verdad!*"

Mrs. Tenorio has two boys in camp; one in Fort Bliss, which is in familiar "Teha." The other, after a long silence, turned up in a strange place. Even now Mrs. Tenorio has to refer to a much crumpled letter to get the name straight. "The name of the camp Tomás is in is 'Eeng-laand.' Do you think it is in California?"

Our speech is a strange mixture of Spanish and English. The Spanish Americans speak a rather bad Spanish well larded with English. We Anglos speak English high-lighted with Spanish.

In an ice storm I call the roofing man to tell him the *canales* over the *portal* are frozen solid and the roof is leaking around the north east *viga*. I am not consciously using Spanish words. That is what a gutter over a porch and a ceiling beam are always called in Santa Fe.

As our houses and our speech have taken on a Spanish flavor, so have our eating habits. When the wind howls over our mesa land and the snow packs deep on our flat roofs, we Anglos begin to think with yearning, not of sausage and hot-cakes, but of good peppery Mexican food. We must have green chiles stuffed with cheese, dipped in egg batter and fried in deep fat, or blue corn tortillas exuding onion, topped with grated cheese and swimming in a sauce "*muy, muy picante*."

Even our Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys—typical Anglo dishes if there ever were any—go Mexican in a big way with their stuffings more *piñon* nuts than bread crumbs.

We use the native *piñon* nut in a great part of our cookery. It tastes partly like hazel nut and partly the way pine trees smell in the rain. It is a very tiny nut and it takes hundreds and hundreds to make even a small sack full. But Mrs. Tenorio has taught me a trick of the country.

"When you go out in the *piñon* forests," she advises, "look for the nest of the little trader rat. You can tell it by the big heap of twigs and trash. Under the twigs and trash you will find lots of *los piñones*—maybe three or four pounds. But," she warns, "take along a nice sack of corn. When you take the little trader rat's *piñones*, leave the corn in their place. Then he won't starve when the snow comes."

I was always taught—it was a part of my earliest education—that "Latins were always cruel to dumb animals."

Anglos new to Santa Fe have rejoiced

COMMON GROUND

because of our cheap domestic labor. There were hundreds of Isabelitas and Carmencitas who would work from eight until eight—the clock around—for four dollars a week. They did our dishes, cleaned our houses, cared for our children, washed our clothes.

But now, “My Isabelita has a typing job,” Mrs. Tenorio announces. “The biggest store in town. The boss came after her last night. His typing girl has gone to Washington. So have all the other Anglo typing girls—or to California for the Defense.”

I know the heart-breaking employment story of the Isabelitas and Carmencitas. A typing job means you are some one. It looks so possible, if you manage to get through high school and then business school at Heaven knows what scrimping of family pennies! But then, after all the work and all the money, you find there are no typing jobs for girls with names like Gonzales and Garcia. The business houses want girls with names like Smith and Jones.

“The boss say, ‘Come tomorrow,’” continues Mrs. Tenorio. “Twenty dollars a week she is going to get.” As she trails her long black skirts and decent black cotton stockings homeward, she smiles like a “rebozoed” Sibyl. “Es la guerra,” she explains.

No matter how strongly the blood of the Protestant may run in Anglo veins, one cannot live long in Santa Fe without taking on a certain aroma of Catholicism. It is like the aroma of hundreds of wood-burning chimneys which swathes the whole town. The church, its traditions, its art, its pageantry, in a very Spanish form, permeates the place.

I patronize one particular, decrepit taxi just to see Hilario salute the Cathedral. As he approaches the sacred building, he slows to a snail’s pace. Exactly opposite the entrance he removes his hat

with his left hand and, with his right, makes the sign of the Cross. There is a split second when the old taxi is practically rudderless. It is only the little medal of Saint Christopher over the windshield that keeps us all from a nasty death against the archbishop’s curbstones.

The saints are very real people to Mrs. Tenorio and all Spanish Americans. In one poverty-stricken country parish the story is told of a terrible drought. The corn rattled in the dry wind and the beans shriveled in the pods. The people went to their bleak, white-washed church and took the statue of the infant Jesus from the altar. Around and around their dry fields they carried him. They even put his baby feet in the sun-baked adobe soil where no plant could grow because there had been no rain.

The next day it clouded over and the skies opened and the rain came down in clanking sheets. Soon all the fields were utterly demolished and the soil washed away. The people were in even deeper despair. Back to the church they went and took the statue of the Virgin and carried her around and around their ruined fields. “Because,” they said, “they wanted Her to see what Her Son had done!”

There is one little statue of the Virgin which is lovingly known as *La Conquistadora*—Our Little Lady Conqueror. She was brought to Santa Fe by the great Captain General De Vargas when he reconquered the country after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. She is about four feet high and has a most elaborate wardrobe in the very latest Hollywood style, all made by the women of Santa Fe. She is so precious to the Catholic population of the town she is allowed on the streets but three times a year and then only under a canopy with little girls tossing flowers in her pathway. The rest of the time she spends in her own particular

ANCIENT ADOBE SOIL

shrine to the left of the high altar in the old Cathedral. De Vargas asked her for a bloodless victory over the Pueblo Indians. This she granted him, and she has been called Our Lady of Victory ever since.

Because she is Our Lady of Victory she is receiving a great deal of attention these days of *la guerra*. Replicas of Mrs. Tenorio, black-shawled and somber, kneel before her shrine and pray for Juans and Miguels who have been reported missing after Corregidor. Next to the Mrs. Tenorios kneel the women from the Pueblos. Their white leg wrappings and gay shawls contrast strangely with the nun-like black of the Mexican women. Mingled with Mexican and Indian are Anglo women praying for Bills and Butches and Juniors—all in the self-same uniform.

Our homes, our speech, our food, our emotional response to religion have all been changed because of the colorful

by our piñon fires and to listen to the rain on our flat roofs.

Our streets see Indians in full Pueblo regalia, old Mexican women in the graceful *rebozo*, cowboys from the range, artists togged out in their idea of beauty. No one gives them a second glance. Our ears hear three languages wherever we go, Spanish, English, and Tewa (Indian). Three cultures mingle and separate and flourish, side by side about us. We are not a critical community.

There is so much talk—erudite talk about Latin America—so many learned commissions to Peru to bring back culture, and so many energetic delegations to Patagonia to bring back trade dollars. We in Santa Fe are a little confused. Doesn't our country know? Right here at home we have a little Latin America. It has enriched our Anglo lives with its ancient culture.

Sometimes I am troubled. In the face of much handkerchief-fluttering to all



influence of our Spanish American neighbors. Psychologically we have become different. Our tempo has changed. Although we are a busy people, we do not rush. Our Latin neighbors live close to their adobe soil. From them we have caught a kind of earthy serenity. We spend much time in our gardens. We make pilgrimages to the mountains to see the autumn gold of the aspen trees. We take time to sit

Latin America, it might be well to check what we have done in the past hundred years for the Latin America in our midst. Mrs. Tenorio's bucket descending into the well makes a charming sound in the still night. But the next morning, as I turn a faucet for hot and cold water in my own laundry tub, I reflect that I could well do without that charming sound of the bucket hitting the water in

COMMON GROUND

Mrs. Tenorio's well if I knew her washing for seven children could be done with less back ache. There are too many Spanish American babies who come painfully into the world only to exit as painfully within a few days. The infant mortality rate of our region is a disgrace to the nation. Many of our rural schools are of the vintage of Civil War times. Of course they may produce a Spanish American Abraham Lincoln. But if we don't pay our teachers a living wage, more and more even of those school houses will be boarded up.

Many of us still think in the old patterns. Many an Anglo housewife is saying desperately to herself these days in a maidless house, "Just wait until this war is over. Isabelita or Carmencita will be only too glad to come back to work for me at three dollars a week." But will Isabelita give up her fine typing job to Miss Smith or Miss Jones and go back to washing didies at three dollars a week? Will Tomás come back from "Eeng-

laand" and mechanized war to farm in a Cervantes-like village with a pensive-eared burro for motive power?

This adobe soil may well be the "proof of the pudding" for all Latin America. It has been for me. You see for fifteen years I was a professional social worker in California. For fifteen years I struggled to help California's large Mexican population adjust to its American environment. Fate with her tongue in her cheek led me to Santa Fe. Here I have taken grateful root in the ancient adobe soil. And the joke is on me. It is I who have done the adjusting.

A native Californian and a graduate of Pomona College, Dorothy L. Pillsbury has also studied in Mexico and Puerto Rico. She now spends most of her time cultivating a large garden of adobe soil in Santa Fe.

Kurt Werth is the illustrator.

AN AMERICAN FINDS AMERICA

HERBERT KUBLY

THIS grave hour, perhaps the most fateful of our history. . . .”

A small radio at my side brought me the unhappy voice of King George VI on that bright and hot Sunday morning of September 3, 1939, as I lay on my bed in my old room of the farmhouse near the Swiss community of New Glarus, Wisconsin.

“There may be dark days ahead. . . .”

I was alone in the house in the small valley where I was born. It was my annual vacation at home—an uneasy vacation, for it had begun on August 24, the day that Hitler and Stalin signed their non-aggression pact. Much of my holiday had been spent at the radio, which now stunned me with the news of a second world war, declared in London at 11 a.m. While the English King pled for the united support of his people, the Fuehrer was driving his troops into Poland with his battle cries of conquest.

Most of the villagers of New Glarus—my family among them—did not know that the war had begun, for they were gathered that fatal hour in the Swiss Evangelical and Reformed Church, built with Calvinistic simplicity on a hill in the center of town, to pray for the continued independence of their mother country, Switzerland. It was *Wilhelm Tell* day in New Glarus. Visitors in town—and there were many—saw a strange sight: two hundred and fifty New Glarus natives attending church in the authentic medieval dress of 14th century Swiss peasantry and

Austrian nobility, in which that afternoon they were to give their second annual performance of Heinrich Schiller’s poetic drama of Swiss history, *Wilhelm Tell*.

Even when church let out, my fellow Swiss Americans took little time to reflect on the catastrophe in Europe. For one thing, they were too engrossed in the afternoon’s pageant. For another, they were sons of Switzerland, the tiny democracy in the heart of Europe whose centuries of successful isolationism were legendary. New Glarus in 1939 was an isolationist community in an isolationist state, voiced in the United States Senate during the first world war by the elder Robert M. LaFollette, and in recent years by his son, Robert M. LaFollette, Jr. War in Europe was a tragedy for Europeans, but it would not touch Americans. And, God willing, it would not touch Switzerland.

Sunday dinner, customarily a prolonged feast on those rare occasions when Mother and Dad had their two children at home, was hurried that day. Mother and I ate with “Hans auf der Mauer,” one of Schiller’s Swiss peasants, who sat at the head of the table—Dad; and with the noblewoman, “Berta von Bruneck,” really my sister, Lila, in the brilliant robes of the Hapsburg court.

Though we arrived early in Elmer’s Grove, the tiny valley bordered by wooded hillsides which provide a natural amphitheater, we found hundreds of persons whose autos bore licenses not only from Wisconsin and neighboring Illinois, but from New York, Michigan, Ohio,

COMMON GROUND

Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Dad and Lila disappeared behind the trees and shrubbery, the "scenery" for the drama, and Mother and I found seats on the benches provided for three thousand spectators on the other side of the slope.

For a half hour more, people poured into the valley. The crowd gossiped in Swiss dialect and in English. Strangers were greeted by twenty-two ushers dressed in the native garb of the twenty-two Swiss cantons.

Finally the crowd silenced and the yodel song of Jenni, the fisher boy, echoed across the valley. (The role of the boy who opens the drama was played by a young girl, selected for her bell-like yodel voice.)

As she finished her song, a group of peasants drove herds of fat Swiss cattle and goats wearing Swiss bells down the slopes of the hills, home from the mountain pastures, for the time was the fall of the year. In the hills other yodelers



answered one another as they herded their cattle to the valley barns. To a Swiss American, sensitive to the richness of peasant culture, the simplicity and the poetry of this scene is deeply moving.

For three hours Swiss and non-Swiss alike thrilled to the drama—the midnight pledge by men of the little Swiss states in the Ruetli Forest to fight the abuse

they were enduring from Austrian overseers; the romance of the courtiers, Rudenz and Berta; the refusal of the heroic Tell to pay tribute to the hat of Gessler on a pole and the subsequent shooting with an arrow by Tell of the apple from the head of his son; the death of Gessler who falls in agony from his white horse when Tell's second arrow enters his heart; and the final glorious climax when signal fires proclaim the independence of Switzerland and the joy is augmented by the ringing of the church bells in the tower of New Glarus' church a quarter mile away.

The story of the liberation of the Swiss from Hapsburg rule and the beginnings of the first European democracy in 1291 carried an emotional punch that September 3 which Schiller himself couldn't have comprehended when he wrote it in 1804.

Suddenly I knew what it meant to be a Swiss American; I knew what it meant to be an American. For the first time I saw that the urge for freedom was not necessarily Swiss, nor was it necessarily American. It was a hope in the dreams of great men everywhere. It took the poem of a German dramatist, written in his native language about a Swiss patriot, and interpreted by Americans in New Glarus, Wisconsin, to make me see it.

As the bells rang across the valley and the people about me climbed noisily down the hillside upon which they'd been sitting, I felt that I had come home. Come home for the first time—not since my last visit to New Glarus the year before—but for the first time since I, as a small boy more than twenty years ago, abandoned in my heart New Glarus and the Swiss to search for what I thought was America.

New Glarus is almost one hundred years old. It was settled in 1845 by one

AN AMERICAN FINDS AMERICA

hundred and ninety-three colonists from Canton Glarus, Switzerland. My own ancestors did not come with the original group, but the first of them, my maternal great-great-grandfather, Jacob Ott, a farmer, migrated to New Glarus four



years later. My paternal great-grandfather, Oswald Kubly, a farmer and stone mason, came ten years later and pioneered the dairy farm which is now owned by my father and where I was born.

Sixty or seventy years in the New World had not changed my people much by 1915, the year of my birth. They were Swiss farmers and cheesemakers who lived in the hills of Wisconsin much as they might have lived in the mountains of Switzerland. They spoke in Swiss dialect, ate kolburwurst and ziger, danced Swiss polkas and waltzes. They observed the Fourth of July, but the Swiss independence day Volksfest on August 1 was jollier. They feasted on Thanksgiving, but they also feasted on Kilby, or Kirchwethe (church-hallowing), observed on the last Sunday in September and continued gaily into the week. Their church language was German, and for many years

the weekly newspaper was printed in German and Swiss dialect.

But the second and third decades of the 20th century brought in tremendous transitional forces—automobile transportation, American newspapers and periodicals, and American music. The films came to New Glarus and finally the radio. The “Americanization” of my people was well under way.

I am of the generation which has most strongly felt the impact. We grew up in an America of bootlegging and jazz, which we discovered with our parents and all of New Glarus. But, while our parents only compromised, we accepted that America. Conflict and rebellion were inevitable, and the result was my generation’s determination to leave New Glarus for America—a determination stronger than that of our great-grandfathers to leave Canton Glarus for America three-quarters of a century ago.

Many of us have left. Most, I believe, will not return. Perhaps they have found what they sought, away from their heritage; perhaps they are still seeking. Perhaps a few will, like me, rediscover New Glarus.

In finding pride again in my Swiss ancestry, I have really completed a sort of cycle, for I started out as a Swiss and was quite determined to remain one. At the age of four I reported at kindergarten unable to speak any English. When I insisted on talking in the dialect to my teacher, and continued to interrupt all academic procedure to visit with my classmates, most of whom understood me, she spanked me soundly.

“When will you learn you’re an American?” she asked.

I swore at her in Swiss—under my breath—and childishly vowed the Swiss would always be good enough for me.

Yet a few years later, when my father

was planning to have our new barn painted and confided to me his intention to paint on the front side the legend, "Nic Kubly & Son," I replied very smugly, "Then you'd better have another son."

What had happened in the meantime?

I had learned to read. Once the magic of the printed page was made accessible, I became quickly and strangely "Americanized." I discovered that people I read about never talked Swiss and lived everywhere but in a sleepy little valley where we discussed only corn crops and milk production.

Today I cannot recall a single fairy tale of Grimm or Anderson, and I have only slight recollections of *The Bobbsey Twins* and *Tom Swift*. But I can recapitulate almost faultlessly the tragi-comic sagas of Beatrice Burton, Faith Baldwin, Adela Rogers St. John, and Ursula Parrott, the same superficial, sex-ridden newspaper and magazine fiction my parents were reading in their "Americanization," a literature which reached its peak in the postwar twenties. Through *The Flapper Wife*, *Footloose*, and *Saint and Sinner* we were finding out how people outside of New Glarus, Wisconsin, lived. The fates of Faith and Cherry, the sisters of *Saint and Sinner* were perused for hours on party lines and in parlors. I remember the stir caused one hot summer afternoon in the middle twenties when a neighbor's wife, who had been to her mailbox for her daily paper before we'd been to ours, excitedly telephoned my mother to tell us "The Flapper Wife" was going to have a baby! Mother hurriedly relayed the news to the rest of the family and we marveled at the strange twistings of fate.

While a Freshman in New Glarus High School, I was extremely popular for several weeks because I had a copy of Ursula Parrott's *Strangers May Kiss*. Everyone in my class read it behind the covers of our biology text. Though our study of

the Swiss-Reformed Catechism indicated otherwise, we learned from Miss Parrott that outside of New Glarus, Wisconsin, people did not need to be married.

The films came next. From a juvenile passion for the wholesome heroics of Tom Mix on Saturday nights with peanuts, we passed to the dubious reality of Constance Bennett and Norma Shearer. In *Common Clay*, Constance was a servant girl in a house of wealth where the son was her undoing, and in *Common Law* she appeared without her clothes as an artist's model.

Norma Shearer revived for us the tragic saga of *Strangers May Kiss*, and in *A Free Soul* she was . . . well, a free soul. I think it was at this time that I developed the first serious ambitions of my life. I would have a play performed on Broadway and I would marry an actress, one who would appear without her clothes. Though to this day I cling to the first, I've relinquished the second.

Music affected us too, and at Friday afternoon song assemblies we sang *Happy Days* and *Yes, We Have No Bananas*, in the classrooms where our parents had sung German hymns and Brahms.

When we were graduated from high school in June, 1933, we were ready for the great migration. It was time for our parole. But 1933 was the heart of the depression and there was no money for expensive colleges on farms where milk was bringing the lowest price since 1907. Some of the girls sulked for a few short months and then married farmers' sons who were older than they. One of my pals went to business school and eventually became a bookkeeper in a Madison hardware store. The most brilliant of my friends chafed for a time and then settled unwillingly on his father's farm. A third farmer's son went to Chicago and found a job with the Department of Sanitation.

I was the only one of my class to go to

AN AMERICAN FINDS AMERICA

the University of Wisconsin, where my "Americanization" continued rapidly. In no time at all I had joined Theta Chi fraternity and flunked an English course. I acquired a full-dress suit and dated the right girls so that my name appeared frequently in the society columns. For Theta Chi parties, I, who four years earlier had suffered the most acute humiliation when my father became unnecessarily spirited on wine he had made himself, now concocted the most deadly and unpalatable formulas, certain ingredients of which came from the University medical laboratories.

In my junior year I was an assistant prom chairman and attended the function with a "Badger Beauty." In my senior year I developed an alarming passion for the daughter of a wealthy Kansas banker, who was a member of Gamma Phi. But she and her Gamma Phi sisters looked with chagrin on my humble origin and she went to the prom with an Alpha Delt from Milwaukee.

But other things were beginning to happen, too. In my junior year I took an anthropology course under Dr. Ralph Linton, now at Columbia University. Dr. Linton was interested in New Glarus, where a European culture had successfully been transplanted to America, and we made several trips there together. Mrs. Linton, then a columnist on a Madison newspaper, unearthed a great deal of material useful in her writing.

The following summer Dr. Charlotte Gower of the sociology department (now Captain Gower, director of training of the Marine Corps Women's Reserve) spent several months in New Glarus studying its history and cultural heritage. I made myself useful to her and learned a great deal.

I became so impressed with the history and the dairy industry, which is so closely allied with the Swiss nationalism of the people, that I immediately started to

write a novel. The project was soon abandoned, but the tide was beginning to turn. At last I was finding America—in New Glarus.

Two weeks after I was graduated from the University in 1937, I was working as a reporter on a newspaper in the East, and here, too—far enough away from it to begin to see it in perspective—I began to find New Glarus. For the material and spiritual poverty of the unemployed industrial workers of Pittsburgh contrasted vividly with the people of my town, who always had an abundance to eat and who went to the Reformed Church on a Sunday morning to thank God for that abundance. Crowded tenements and soot-tortured apartments made me wish for the spacious rooms of the farmhouse in Wisconsin. More and more I caught myself speaking in glowing terms of New Glarus, until one day a fellow reporter in Pittsburgh retorted, "You musta been nuts to leave the place!"

The reporter's name was Burton and he was the brother of Beatrice Burton who had stirred in me my earliest restlessness.

New Glarus is today Wisconsin's wealthiest rural community, and its 1,000 citizens, set in the center of perhaps 1,000 Swiss farm folk, drive more automobiles, listen to more radios, and enjoy the luxuries of more refrigerators and electric stoves and other appliances than any other community of the mid-western state. The surrounding area, Green County—the "Little Switzerland of America"—has a population of 23,142 persons and 70,000 milk cows. The early settlers soon found the hillsides better suited to grazing than to plowing, and turned to the industry of their homelands—dairying and cheese-making. Green County now produces fifty-four per cent of all the Swiss cheese made in the United States, and insists its product is as fine as any that is imported.

COMMON GROUND

Its factories duplicate the Old-World processes with more scientific equipment—processes which are largely a succession of fermentations by different bacteria at exactly the right times. Aging of the huge cartwheels—an average drum weighs two hundred pounds—is an important factor in producing quality cheese. For the Swiss, who likes his cheese as he likes his wine, it's the older the better.

In addition to the cheese industry, there is a Pet Milk Company plant in New Glarus, to which several hundred farmers haul their milk. Second in industrial importance is the lace and embroidery produced in the Upright Swiss Embroidery Company on the edge of the village, now busy filling Army and Navy

With one exception I have been home only a week or two at a time in the last six years. In this interval New Glarus has rediscovered itself as I rediscovered it. The people have largely discarded the superficial values of the postwar years when every manifestation of their Swiss heritage was frowned upon. Those years did not bring them the America they sought. Now they are recapturing the uniqueness of their pasts and in it are finding the spirit of the New World.

In 1935 a pageant of New Glarus' history, written by a native son, was performed by the entire community and made an impression throughout the Middle West. Charlotte Gower's summer in New Glarus the following year renewed



contracts for chevrons and insignias.

Half of the people of New Glarus today bear the names of the original group of settlers. Among them are the Hoesly, Duerst, Schindler, Hefty, Stauffacher, and Becker families. A writer friend in New York insists that the most wonderful name she has ever heard is that of the pioneer, Hilarious Wild. A descendant by the same name lives in New Glarus today.

the people's Swiss Americanism. Interest in Swiss foods and holidays was revived. The Swiss wedding dance—at which the young bride and groom entertain almost the entire community on their bridal night with Swiss folk dancing—is again a prerequisite to marital happiness.

The PWA brought a new and greatly enlarged high school, and the NYA provided labor for the beginnings of a Swiss

Museum and a replica of the original log village of ninety-eight years ago. The Historical Society was organized to administer the Museum. Authentic Swiss architecture is being revived, even to the rocks on the roof, though Wisconsin winds hardly threaten to blow the homes away. The New Glarus Yodelers delight audiences in several states on their annual concert tours.

In 1938 the first two performances of *Wilhelm Tell* were held. I was at Cape Cod that summer and missed them, but the following year, and every year since, I have made my pilgrimage to *Wilhelm Tell*, as have many other Swiss Americans from all parts of the United States.

I believe the war has completed the true Americanization of New Glarus. For while the performance of *Tell* I witnessed in 1939 was an exhibition of resurgent pride in national background, by 1942 it had grown to be a great deal more. The question was raised last year, for instance, whether the annual performance should not be discontinued until peace time. Important cast members were in the armed forces and many people remembered the fate of German culture during the First World War. But the *Wilhelm Tell* Guild—its members are all the people connected with the production—decided that these dark years need more than ever the poetic strength and vision of *Wilhelm Tell*. Before the 1942 performance—which marked the 651st anniversary of the only remaining democracy in Central Europe—the Guild distributed a pamphlet which said:

“America is fighting to preserve a free world and democratic ideals—the same kind of freedom and democracy which the Swiss have preserved in their tiny nation for six centuries. Both nations have had to fight again and again to preserve that liberty and they are closer bound than ever. Nowhere is that feeling stronger than in

New Glarus, where, each year, *Wilhelm Tell* is a holy reaffirmation of the democratic spirit.”

“*Tell* means a free America and a free world,” a farmer who is a member of the cast told me. “Gessler (the hated Austrian imperial governor of the cantons of Schwyz and Unterwalden, who is the villain of the drama) was small potatoes to this other Austrian who has plunged the world into darkness because he hates freedom.”

I reminded him that Hitler quotes *Tell* in a chapter heading of *Mein Kampf* with, “The strong man is mightiest alone.”

“But *Tell* also says, ‘We shall be free as our fathers, rather dead than a life in slavery!’” the farmer retorted.

The Swiss Americans in Wisconsin—once isolationist—now are fighting the war as vehemently as any group of Americans. Their sons are in the services, and farm women, liberated from the labors of the farm only within the past decade, are returning to the barns and field because of the farm labor shortage. The government is buying their cheese for lend-lease and for the troops abroad. The Pet Milk Company is canning milk for the war zones, and the Upright Swiss Embroidery Company is making Army and Navy chevrons. The people contribute liberally to war-relief agencies, and recently they had their first blackout.

When I think of the war, I think first of Mrs. Ida Maurer, the widow of a New Glarus farmer. Ida came to Wisconsin from Switzerland as a bride more than thirty years ago. She has never stopped being Swiss; she contributes the dialect column to the *New Glarus Post*. Yet Ida has four sons in the Army and the Navy. She herself has taken a defense job in Madison, thirty miles away. Last Christmas, in addition to her own large family, she entertained a score of soldiers sta-

COMMON GROUND

tioned at an Army air base near Madison, who were too far from home to spend the holidays with their own families.

America was intended for such as she.

I have a young friend, now Private Murray of the Army. A city-bred lad of mixed ancestry who grew up in depression years, he has had few of the advantages to which his sharp intellect and his deep sensitivity entitle him. He has never been in New Glarus, but he has listened to me tell of it for hours. When the war is over he wants to go there to live.

"My dream of New Glarus is what keeps me going," he wrote me recently. "If I fight, that's what I'll be fighting for, and it will somehow make sense."

Today my sister and I are both one thousand miles from home. But we will return. We are peasants and we believe in the agrarian way of life, both as a post-war economic adjustment, and for our own spiritual and physical health. We know we are both physical and mental organisms and our good life requires a balance of work and thought. Perhaps we

were driven from the farm because the balance was destroyed by an overemphasis on physical labor. But away from the farm our emphasis has reversed, our activity is sedentary and mental. Sacrificing labor, we have also sacrificed the zenith of our spiritual powers.

We will go back to the green valleys where on a hot summer night the music of Swiss cowbells lulls one to sleep. Back to food and music at Esther Stauffacher's, and to beer and music at Ernest Thierstein's tavern. Back to our cousins, the Hoeslys, the Elmers, the Heftys, the Otts, and the Kublys.

Back to New Glarus and back to America. Where "We shall be free as our fathers, rather dead than a life of slavery."

After five years as a Pittsburgh newspaperman, ending up with two years as art editor of the Sun-Telegraph, Herbert Kubly is now on the New York Herald Tribune.

Bernardine Custer is the illustrator.

CIVILIAN DEFENSE

From scores of differing ancestral lands, the common people of America are uniting in the nation-wide task of civilian defense. Whether in mixed groups or in groups of people of similar descent, their energies are bent to the same ends—the giving of their blood and talents and time and money for the ultimate victory of the United Nations and a better, more secure world.

GET THE EVACUEES OUT!

M. MARGARET ANDERSON

CITIZENS of a large complicated democracy do not always have a chance for direct participation in righting democracy's wrongs, and the remoteness of our effort tends to make us as individuals feel sterile and unimportant and restless. We itch to have a hand in things directly.

There is a job for us—important, specific, calculable.

It is the resettling of our Japanese Americans—their dispersal resettlement out of the government camps where they are now detained into productive jobs around the country for their own—and America's—good. This is no program for the government alone—though the War Relocation Authority, the War Manpower Commission, the War Department, and the Department of Justice are behind it; it is no program for the social agencies alone—though the churches, the International Institutes, the American Friends Service Committee, the Y's, and other agencies are behind it. It is ultimately the responsibility of the individuals at the base of American communities, for it is there that the evacuee must eventually find his job, his housing, his community acceptance—his assimilation into the American scene.

There are readers who go with us in COMMON GROUND on everything except those of Japanese descent; there are others who go with us on everything except the Negro or the Jew. But democracy is no such half-way process. It is a tough belief, and it brooks no emotional withdrawals. We really mean democracy—at home and abroad—or we don't.

It seems crystal clear that against our Japanese Americans democracy has done deep wrong. Evacuated from their West Coast homes in the hysteria that followed Pearl Harbor, over 100,000 people, two-thirds of them native-born American citizens, have been detained now over a year in government camps euphemistically known as relocation centers but uncomfortably close to concentration camps; detained not on investigated and determined dangerousness to the country, but because they happen to have been born with Japanese faces and names, and because the rest of us—citizens by no better right than the almost 70,000 Nisei, the accidental right of birth—forgot for a moment the story of transplantation that lies behind all American citizenship, were blind to the implications of something that threatened the security of all Americans. For if the United States government can not only evacuate from designated areas but indefinitely detain American citizens, without a hearing, only because of race or nationality background, then no one of us is safe.

To undo the wrong we allowed to happen will not be easy. Wrongs breed evils; and no one can read the account later in these pages of the spiritual crack-up of families and individuals in the centers and not realize the size of the social problems we have created for ourselves. We will have need of great imagination and understanding and vision. We will have to ask ourselves how we would have taken a year and a half's arbitrary confinement in our own country because—

GET THE EVACUEES OUT!

say—we happened to be of Swedish or Swiss or Italian or German descent and the United States happened to be at war with that ancestral homeland. Would we have been docile evacuees? Would we have remained unembittered? Could we have lost our personal freedom and still have kept our faith in the ultimate justice of the democracy we thought we were part of? We have asked this of Japanese Americans.

For other reasons, too, the job will not be easy. Anti-democratic forces are always better organized and more vocal than the forces of goodwill. It is these who see danger to community security in the arrival of a half dozen badly frightened evacuees, cleared by the FBI and the WRA, to take up jobs in their city; who stir up scare editorials and hurl their shameful epithets, "A Jap's a Jap," forgetting that an American—regardless of his descent—is also an American, and if the title is deserved it is because the wearer practices American beliefs. It is these forces who call mass meetings of protest at giving fellow-Americans jobs, even while we import labor from Mexico and the Bahamas and Puerto Rico; who have written a succession of discriminatory laws into state legislation, a process insidiously creeping eastward until now even as liberal a state as Iowa would ship relocated students of Japanese descent back to the centers. And this, while we engage in a colossal war for the freedom of the common people of the world. America is people, too. It is time we stopped being intoxicated with ourselves and our mission and ideas, and really had a look at what we are doing here at home. It is understandable why we like to look away.

The following pages outline the general resettlement program—what has been accomplished, what remains to be done. The close reader will find many areas in which he can take hold individually and

help. If he lives in Cleveland, Chicago, Peoria, Milwaukee, Madison, Detroit, Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Louis, Denver, Des Moines, or Cincinnati, he can get in touch with local city-wide committees on resettlement already functioning. Elsewhere, he can be on the alert for jobs at prevailing wages and report them to the nearest relocation supervisor of the WRA (addresses in Robert W. Frase's article which follows). He can go quietly about organizing a resettlement committee of public citizens and social agencies in his own town (too early and immature publicity on such a committee lends itself to the creation of scare rumors) to work in connection with the National Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans at 297 Fourth Avenue, New York City, (sponsored jointly by the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council of North America, and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America). He can bestir himself on housing for resettled evacuees, a serious problem in war-boom towns; he can open his own home to them and reward himself with an intensely interesting new contact. He can take some of them under his wing and see they meet people their own age, go to the movies with them, help them pick up the old normal strands of taken-for-granted living, help them find their way back to what they thought was America. He—the individual at the base of American society—can create the true climate of democracy.

For this is a test of democracy. If we cannot solve so small and tidy a problem as the dispersal resettlement and assimilation of 110,000 people of Japanese descent within our borders, what hope is there for our own 13,000,000 Negroes and for the great masses of the people of the world who look hungrily to us for moral leadership?

RELOCATING A PEOPLE

ROBERT W. FRASE

IN THE most extreme manpower shortage in our history, the government is confronted with the paradox of maintaining 110,000 people of Japanese descent, evacuated a year ago from Pacific Coast military areas, in camps operated at considerable expense to the government, where their full productive possibilities cannot be utilized. More than 40,000 of them are employable; the majority are American citizens. Their resettlement for residence and employment in other sections of the country, rather than the operation of relocation centers as ends in themselves, has therefore become the major objective of the federal government. In this policy the War Relocation Authority has the approval of the War Department, the Department of Justice, and the War Manpower Commission.

Nearly two-thirds of these people are American citizens. Nearly two-thirds were born in America and most have attended American schools. Only a few thousand of this citizen group have ever been outside the boundaries of the United States. The draft-age men not already in uniform were made eligible to volunteer for military service by an official announcement of the War Department on January 28, 1943, which recognized "the inherent right of every faithful citizen, regardless of ancestry, to bear arms in the Nation's battle."

The aliens, who comprise the remaining third, are barred from citizenship by our immigration laws which do not permit Orientals to acquire citizenship by naturalization. Almost without exception, how-

ever, they have lived in the United States for at least two decades, and the majority of them have been here for three decades, or longer.

When these people were evacuated, there was no intent to remove from them any of their rights or to deprive them of the opportunity of earning a livelihood and contributing to the Nation's economy. The relocation of these people now—of both citizens and aliens whose records indicate they would not endanger the security of the country—in normal communities where they may enjoy the full benefits of American justice is a national problem deserving the thoughtful consideration of every person who believes in American principles. Altogether, the Japanese American population evacuated from the West Coast comprises less than one-tenth of one per cent of our total population. Dispersed throughout the interior of the country, only a few families to any one community, they should be able, with their wide diversity of skills, to contribute notably to the civilian and wartime needs of the Nation.

II

A factual account of the brief history of relocation may throw some light on this developing government policy of individual resettlement and dispersal.

When the evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry from Military Area No. 1 along the Pacific Coast and the southern part of Arizona was first announced by the Commanding General of the Western

COMMON GROUND

Defense Command in February 1942, it was apparently assumed that the process would be largely, if not entirely, voluntary in nature. During most of March 1942, persons of Japanese ancestry, aliens as well as citizens, were encouraged to move out of Military Area No. 1 and go wherever they pleased in other parts of the United States. By the middle of March, however, it became apparent that 112,000 people of all ages and occupations could not, within the short space of a few weeks, close out their economic affairs and find new homes and new methods of making a living in other parts of the country without considerable assistance and direction from the government. An agency to provide such assistance was established by Executive Order 9102 creating the War Relocation Authority on March 18, 1942.

This Executive Order was broad and flexible. It directed the Authority to formulate and effectuate a program for the "relocation, maintenance, and supervision" of persons excluded from military areas. It authorized the Authority to provide "in so far as feasible and desirable for the employment of such persons at useful work in industry, commerce, agriculture, or public projects, prescribe the terms and conditions of such public employment, and safeguard the public interest in the private employment of such persons." Executive Order 9102 by no means crystallized policy with respect to the form of government assistance to be given these evacuated people, but it did reflect the view that voluntary dispersal was not the complete answer to the problems created by the decision to evacuate.

On March 27, two weeks after the establishment of the War Relocation Authority, the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command issued a "freeze order" which ended voluntary evacuation from Military Area No. 1 at

midnight, two days later. Thereafter, persons of Japanese ancestry were not to leave this area except as permitted in further proclamations or orders of the Commanding General. Prior to March 29, 1942 only some 8,000 persons of Japanese ancestry had voluntarily left Military Area No. 1. They settled for the most part in that part of California not in Military Area No. 1 and in other western states, particularly in Utah, Idaho, and Colorado where many had formerly worked or had relatives and friends. One of the principal reasons for the "freeze order" was undoubtedly the excitement and opposition which developed in some localities in the intermountain states toward the resettlement of the evacuated people in their areas. In a statement made at a press conference in Salt Lake City on April 7, 1942, Colonel Karl E. Bendetsen of the Western Defense Command stated that "the voluntary evacuation program had broken down because only small groups left; there existed much misunderstanding; state officials had said 'We won't take them'; and there was a great possibility of some untoward incident."

Thus voluntary evacuation foundered in part on the rocks of adverse "community sentiment." This question of community sentiment, or the reaction of the public, has continued to be the most important single influence on the whole effort toward the relocation of Japanese Americans.

The "freeze order" of March 27, 1942 was a large step in the direction of establishing government camps where the evacuated people might live during the war and be protected from incidents arising out of public hostility toward them. But before a definite decision to develop the program in this direction was made, Director Eisenhower of the WRA and Colonel Bendetsen of the Western Defense Command met on April 7, 1942

RELOCATING A PEOPLE

with the Governors and Attorneys General of 17 western states to discuss the possibility of the resettlement of evacuees in the western half of the country. The state officials at this meeting indicated strongly that the evacuated people would meet with a very unfriendly reception and that outbreaks of violence would result. Following the meeting, the WRA redoubled its efforts to locate sites where camps (relocation centers) might be built to house the evacuated people and where they might be employed and support themselves at least in part by growing food. The selection of two of these sites was announced before the end of April, and construction of the buildings was begun shortly afterwards by the Army engineers.

For the next month, little thought was given by the WRA to the relocation of evacuees as individuals or in family units in private employment outside the proposed relocation centers. About the first of May, however, other voices began to be heard in the western states. There was a growing scarcity of agricultural labor, particularly for the hand operations involved in thinning and cultivating sugar beets. Agricultural interests here and there began to request permission to employ the evacuated people in this type of work.

Both the WRA and the Western Defense Command—which by now had concentrated a large proportion of the evacuees into temporary camps in Military Area No. 1 designated as assembly centers—were still very much concerned about the possibilities of violence against the evacuees in private employment. However, on May 13, the military authorities and the WRA announced certain conditions under which evacuees might be employed by private persons. Among the conditions imposed was that the governor of the state and the county officials at the

proposed place of employment should make a written pledge that law and order would be maintained and the evacuees protected. These conditions were first met for Malheur County, Oregon, and late in May 1942 the first group of evacuees left the Portland, Oregon, assembly center to work for sugar beet farmers in that county.

It soon developed that the evacuees themselves were as much concerned about community sentiment as were the military authorities and the civilian officials of the WRA. They were very reluctant at first to accept the employment offered by the sugar beet farmers; but, as the first groups arrived at the place of employment and wrote back favorable letters, increasing numbers decided to give it a trial. By the end of the early summer seasonal labor demand in mid-July, some 1,800 evacuees had gone out into farm work in eastern Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Utah. The military authorities, under whose jurisdiction they then were, imposed no restrictions on who might go out to work in this way. As in the period of voluntary evacuation, anyone could go. The only restrictions imposed by the federal government were orders of the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command restricting travel to a single county.

To the relief of the WRA, the adverse public reaction which had been anticipated if the evacuees were to accept private employment outside protected government camps did not develop to any considerable degree. There were only a few isolated incidents—such as the attempt of a farmer, with a sailor son in the Pacific, to pitchfork an evacuee in a small town store, which was averted by bystanders. There was also no evidence of any subversive activity or sabotage on the part of any of the 1,800 persons working in these four states. On the other hand, there

COMMON GROUND

were a good many communities where the evacuees were welcomed for their labor only, and were discriminated against in stores and eating places and in other ways.

It was quite evident by mid-summer in 1942 that public sentiment was not so adverse as to make hazardous the employment of the evacuated people in agricultural work in the western states. On the basis of this experience, the WRA began to consider assisting and encouraging evacuees to leave relocation centers for other types of employment in other areas of the country. The first tentative step in this direction was taken on July 20, 1942, with the issuance of an administrative instruction setting up procedures under which American citizens of Japanese ancestry might leave the relocation centers if (1) the applicant had never been to Japan even for a brief visit, (2) an investigation at the relocation center and a check with the records of the FBI had been made, (3) he had secured employment outside the Western Defense Command, (4) the sentiment in the locality in which he was to be employed was not so adverse as to lead to a disturbance of the peace. A favorable determination on community sentiment was a definite requirement. In addition, the investigation and the record check with the FBI were designed to allay the fears of communities to which the evacuees might go.

Less than ten evacuees, however, had left relocation centers under the temporary instruction of July 20, by the time formal and definitive leave regulations of the WRA were issued on October 1, 1942. The principal change embodied in these regulations was to extend eligibility for leave from the relocation centers to all persons, aliens as well as citizens; and the removal of any restrictions on the area to which the applicants might go (except for the military areas on the Pacific Coast which required special permits from the

Western Defense Command). In practice, however, there was a very considerable delay in approving applications for employment or residence in the Eastern Defense Command, which by informal agreement were checked with the War Department. The provisions regarding investigation, FBI record check, and determinations on community sentiment were retained.

Under these regulations some 800 persons had left relocation centers by January 1, 1943, about 550 of them college students. This was in contrast with the 10,000 persons working outside relocation centers on seasonal leave at the height of the harvest season in November 1942. The rate of departures on indefinite leave was gradually increasing, but the process was slow and cumbersome. Application for leave was ordinarily not made until the individual had secured employment, and frequently, by the time that leave was authorized, the job had evaporated. This delay could only be avoided by securing applications in advance. This procedure was instituted on a wholesale basis in February 1943 when a registration for leave clearance of all evacuees 17 years of age and over was begun. But a more fundamental reason for the slowness of relocation during the last three months of 1942 was the fact that evacuees were left to their own devices in trying to find employment opportunities and had no effective way of getting in touch with prospective employers often thousands of miles away.

Naturally, the possibility of enlisting the co-operation of the U.S. Employment Service as a means of getting evacuees in touch with the labor market was explored at an early date. The employment service was not, however, an automatic and complete solution to the problem. It was not equipped to check on community sentiment, for instance, and it was geared

RELOCATING A PEOPLE

primarily to the placement of local people who could be seen and interviewed by prospective employers. The only practicable thing seemed to be for the WRA to establish a small field staff to explore community sentiment and channel employment opportunities back to the relocation centers.

Early in January 1943 this field staff was started with the opening of an office in Chicago. (226 West Jackson Boulevard, Elmer K. Shirrell, relocation supervisor.) There are now six additional offices and a small number of field men working out of these offices in the surrounding states:

Cleveland, 944 Union Commerce Building. Harold Fistere, relocation supervisor.

Denver, Midland Savings Building. Harold S. Choate, relocation supervisor.

Kansas City, 1509 Fidelity Building. E. H. Leker, relocation supervisor.

Salt Lake City, 318 Atlas Building. H. Rex Lee, relocation supervisor.

New York City, Room 1410, 50 Broadway. Robert Cullum, relocation supervisor.

Little Rock, Pyramid Building. E. B. Whitaker, relocation supervisor.

Now that the feasibility of the enterprise has been demonstrated, arrangements have been made whereby the local offices of the U.S. Employment Service will begin to channel employment opportunities into the relocation centers as well. Another recent step designed to expedite relocation is the provision by the WRA of financial assistance for travel when evacuees do not have sufficient cash resources to get to the place of employment.

The procedural and administrative problems of relocation, which undoubtedly have been a drag on progress to date, have thus been pretty well liquidated. The fundamental problem of community

sentiment still remains. This has two major aspects. There is the "real" community sentiment, which in an extreme form may make life very unpleasant for evacuees in a community, or in a mild form may merely restrict to the less desirable jobs the types of employment offered them. The second aspect involves the "impressions" of community sentiment in the minds of those still in the centers. On the whole these impressions appear to be less favorable than the reality. Even now, with some 4,000 persons out of the centers on indefinite leave and perhaps half that number on seasonal leave, largely in agricultural work, there may soon be more employment opportunities than takers, because of this fear of the "outside." This is particularly true among the first generation, whose average age is in the late fifties, and who have an understandable hesitation about leaving economic security and the companionship of their friends in relocation centers to make a new start in strange communities.

It is hoped that the young American citizens in the relocation centers will gradually lose their fears and doubts about the "outside" as more people leave, and that they will encourage their parents to follow them. Although offers of employment for domestic service and seasonal agricultural work continue to pour in, greatly in excess of the numbers of evacuees who have ever done these types of work, other opportunities of a diversified nature are now developing. It will still be necessary, of course, for many evacuees to seek and take employment in occupations other than the ones in which they were engaged prior to the war; but the same necessity exists in some degree for millions of other Americans. Many occupations—such as selling—have almost disappeared under wartime conditions.

COMMON GROUND

An indication of the variety of skills represented by the group is given in this table of occupations of Americans of Japanese ancestry, 14 years of age and over, in California, Oregon, and Washington, on the basis of the 1940 census.

Agriculture:

Men	17,785
Women	4,242
Retail trade (clerks, salesmen, etc.):	
Men	6,592
Women	2,690
Wholesale trade (both sexes)	2,190
Domestic service (private homes):	
Men	2,421
Women	2,323
Hotels, laundries, cleaners, and dyers	3,592
Manufacturing (all kinds)	1,978
Professional services	1,326
Finance, insurance, real estate	656
Railroading, trucking, etc.	686
Auto storage, rental, repair	292
Other business and repair services	119

On the whole, a better public understanding of Japanese Americans appears to be developing; and as more people around the country become personally acquainted with relocated evacuees, this trend may be expected to continue. The recently announced unit in the United States Army to be composed solely of American citizens of Japanese ancestry has been the most important single event influencing the public at large to consider these

people fellow Americans. The reinstitution of Selective Service would probably have an even greater effect in this direction.

If present developments continue, it can reasonably be expected that a very large proportion, perhaps even a large majority, of the young American citizens of employable age in the centers will relocate during the coming months. The resettlement of the older people, especially those with families of young children, will naturally take place much more slowly; and methods not now envisioned will need to be developed to make it possible.

With the example before us of a far larger number of persons of Japanese ancestry in Hawaii and the rest of the continental United States going about their business in a normal way, like first or second-generation Italian or German Americans, it is hardly conceivable we cannot find some method to absorb a large majority of Japanese Americans back into productive effort and into American life. In large measure the program will be a test of American democracy, for its ultimate success will depend on the goodwill and capacity and vision of Americans who happen to be of different descent and whose forebears also chose this land as theirs.

Robert Frase is assistant chief of the employment division of the War Relocation Authority.

STUDENT RELOCATION

ROBERT W. O'BRIEN

A YEAR after the mass evacuation of West Coast Japanese and Japanese Americans into inland camps, more than a thousand students have been relocated in some 150 colleges throughout the United States to resume their interrupted studies. Student relocation began, in fact, two weeks after Palm Sunday in 1942, when General J. L. DeWitt's orders went into effect prohibiting travel by people of Japanese ancestry within Zone I of the Western Defense Command. Six students were granted permission to travel from the restricted area to attend the University of Idaho. This first venture in student relocation proved singularly inauspicious, however. None of the students was allowed to attend classes, and two were placed in protective custody in the local jail.

The Idaho Argonaut, college student newspaper, protested the action in an editorial entitled "Six American Citizens":

"Six American citizens were forced to leave their home city of Seattle last week. The reason was purely legitimate. The area had been declared a military zone, and those students were of Japanese ancestry. Last night those same six American citizens were forced to leave their homes of one week in Moscow, but the reason was not military. It was a combination of political haymaking and the threat of violence by a small group of local rough-necks that forced this evacuation. Students on the university campus were not opposed to American-born Japanese students living there. The majority of the

people of Moscow were not anti-Nisei, but the small group was loud and active. So six homesick kids, three boys and three girls, became the pawns in a political game and live targets for jingoistic patriotism.

"When people begin talking citizenship in terms of race, they are borrowing from the handbook of fascist leaders. When a minority group begins shoving another smaller group of citizens around with no regard to their rights as citizens, they are using the tactics of Nazi storm-troopers.

"Certainly we should keep this shameful action from those University of Idaho students and citizens of Moscow who are fighting now on all world fronts. We think it would hardly comfort those who are risking their lives to preserve and protect this 'land of the free' to learn that its principles are thus defended at home."

II

To interpret adequately the scope and later success of the student relocation program requires some knowledge about the role of the Nisei in the colleges before evacuation. On December 7, 1941, there were 2,557 American-born students of Japanese ancestry registered in 74 colleges and universities in California, Oregon, and Washington.

Although agitation against the Japanese on the Pacific Coast began long before Pearl Harbor, this phenomenon was absent from the educational systems. In the

COMMON GROUND

school room Nisei were accepted as Americans and treated as such.

The outstanding adjustment of the Nisei to American academic life has been commented upon by many authorities. Professor Jesse F. Steiner in his provocative book, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, cites figures to show that the children of this immigrant group have nearly three times as many high school valedictorians and honor students as their percentage in the school population would indicate. In one of Seattle's high schools, one-fourth of the twenty class speakers during the past ten years have been Americans of Japanese ancestry, who comprise approximately only one-tenth of the whole student body. In Southern California the Theodore Roosevelt High School has announced that 26 per cent of its Nisei seniors were in the upper 10 per cent of their class.

May, 1942, saw the award of the President's medal to the University of California Senior with the highest scholastic standing go to Harvey Itano, who had been evacuated to the Tule Lake Relocation Center. A week later the Washington State College scholarship to the honor graduate of Lincoln High School of Tacoma was won by George Kurose of the same Center. A study I am now making shows that membership in honorary fraternities is disproportionately higher than that of any other group. This is a matter of great significance, because invitation to honorary societies implies personal as well as academic qualifications.

Athletic and extra-curricular activities are perhaps a more valid but less measurable criterion of assimilation than academic achievement. Hundreds of Nisei have participated in football, basketball, track, wrestling, swimming, baseball, boxing, debating, and the editing of school newspapers and yearbooks. In the year before evacuation, for example, Bob Hosagawa was president of the senior class at

Whitman College, while Kazuma "Casey" Hisanaga was captain of Pomona's football team. "Casey," now an officer in the United States Army stationed at Camp McCoy, was the student to whom his classmates dedicated their Senior Ivy Chapel address.

The evacuation crisis brought to the surface the fellowship which Nisei and Caucasian students had for each other. In communities all along the Pacific Coast there have been many examples of this product of democratic, non-segregated education. One of the most interesting occurred at Santa Ana High School, where one of the pole vault stars was a Caucasian, the other a Nisei. The athlete of Japanese ancestry was evacuated the week before the relay carnival. His friend won the medal but forwarded it to the Poston Relocation Center with this note: "You could always jump half an inch higher than I, team mate." The other side of the picture is illustrated by Frank Watanabe, brilliant University of Washington tennis player, who gave up a scholarship and a chance to transfer to an eastern university before Japanese were "frozen" on the Coast preliminary to forced evacuation, in order to play in the crucial varsity series and not let his team down.

With the announcement by General DeWitt that mass evacuation of all Japanese and their American-born children was imminent, student relocation committees were formed on all the major campuses on the Pacific Coast. College administrators and personnel officials, following the leadership of Presidents Robert G. Sproul of California and Lee Paul Sieg of Washington, wrote their colleagues in the non-restricted zones on behalf of Nisei students. Registrars and deans in many instances gave up vacation time to assist in evaluation of students for relocation. With two exceptions, every one of

STUDENT RELOCATION

the seventy colleges with Nisei on their rolls furnished transcripts without fees. The colleges of the Pacific Coast were united in their efforts to provide democratic rights for their students.

From hundreds of teachers came letters like this, each about a different student: "I cannot speak about others, but *this* student I know, and he must be allowed to go on with his college work. He has outstanding possibilities and he is completely dedicated to American traditions."

Vigorous effort on the part of their colleagues to find jobs for the some thirty Nisei on college faculties added much to the morale not only of the displaced faculty but of the entire Japanese American group. One younger Nisei teacher wrote: "I am deeply grateful to the University for having given me the opportunity to follow out my ambition to teach. As you may or may not know, I was a member of what is usually termed the underprivileged class, economically, not racially, during most of my youth and early manhood. This country is the only one in which an individual of my background could have been permitted to become a university professor. My own experience has made me realize more than most Americans that the principles of Americanism are actually converted into action.

"Regarding the problem of Americanism, I think my wife and I can safely say that we cherish our Americanism more than most Americans do. First, our stay in Japan, where most of the personal liberties as we know them are denied, made us realize even more the importance of the democratic way of life. In the second place, the conduct of the American people as a whole during the last six months, since the attack on Pearl Harbor, has enabled us to experience in a form denied to most Americans the true tolerance that is at the base of our American way of life. True, there have been many instances of

intolerance in regard to the Japanese people in this country, but, at the same time, the attitude of the American public has been tremendously fair. Because acts of kindness and tolerance have been unspectacular, they naturally have not been given the publicity that the acts of violence and intolerance have been given.

"Ten years ago, when I was a college student, I would not have believed it had anyone told me that at one time I would be expressing sentiments like those above. You will recall that the early 1930s were characterized by a tremendous amount of cynicism among American college students in regard to the question of patriotism. However, as I have indicated, our experiences both in Japan and in this country have instilled in us a love of the United States which really springs from the heart. We are accepting evacuation because we consider it part of our duties as Americans to co-operate fully with the government in this time of great crisis. My only hope is that I shall soon be permitted to contribute my services to the government in the work for which I am best qualified. These are not times when we can indulge in the luxury of worry as far as our personal futures are concerned."

III

Three conferences marked the beginning of the Student Relocation Council. The first held in mid-March, 1942, at the University of California YMCA set up a clearing-house under the direction of Joseph Conard to co-ordinate the efforts of the campus relocation committees. Six weeks later the Pacific Coast delegates to the Conference of Foreign Student Advisers at Cleveland presented the problem of the Nisei to their eastern, southern, and mid-western colleagues. The result of these preliminary efforts was the self-evacuation of some 216 students to 29 different institutions. The majority were

COMMON GROUND

placed before voluntary evacuation was halted, although some, like the six students who started for Idaho, were given travel permits after March 29.

The third and most important conference was held in Chicago May 29, when Clarence Pickett of the American Friends' Service Committee, at the request of John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, called together educators, representatives of organizations dealing with student placement, and officials from the interested government agencies to form the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council. Local committees from the Pacific Coast together with the Japanese American Citizens League placed their facilities at the disposal of the new organization. Milton S. Eisenhower, then Director of the War Relocation Authority, designated the NJASRC as the official agency for the resettlement of college and high school students. The Council was divided into two sections: the Philadelphia office was to find college openings and raise scholarship money; the western offices in Berkeley, Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle were to assemble information about the students.

During the month of June an elaborate questionnaire was prepared and administered to 2,166 students in the assembly and relocation centers—those Nisei high school graduates and college students who wished to continue their education and believed there was some chance they might be allowed to do so. In the following nine months an additional 800 have signed up for educational relocation. Representatives of the Council visited each of the camps to explain the program in detail and interview the candidates.

By July, the first questionnaires together with letters of reference and high school and college transcripts were ready for analysis by counselors and college personnel officials. Due consideration was given to

questions of professional goal, special interests or talents, evidence of social adjustment to both Caucasians and Japanese, degree of maturity, and the sense of social responsibility toward the Japanese community and American life in general. When a student received a high rating from an analyst, he was matched with a college opening and tentatively accepted, pending the investigation of his loyalty by a designated government agency.

Meanwhile the Philadelphia office increased the number of educational institutions accepting Nisei from the 29 available in May, 1942, to some 459 a year later. Each of these colleges has either registered one or more students or has indicated a willingness to do so. In addition, each has been cleared by the War and Navy Departments as suitable for accepting evacuees from the War Relocation Centers. Scholarship aid in the form of remission of fees, work opportunities, and financial grants from colleges, individuals, church boards, and the World Student Service Fund have reached a total of approximately \$200,000.

Fourteen denominational groups, representing the major religious faiths in this country, have joined with the Friends, the Carnegie Fund, and the Columbia Foundation in underwriting the budget of the NJASRC. In February, 1943, the western offices were merged with the Philadelphia office under Carlisle V. Hibbard, who succeeded Robert W. O'Brien and Robbins Barstow as national director.

The able leadership of President John W. Nason of Swarthmore College, the national chairman of the Council, has assured consistency in a staff which was, in part, on loan from educational institutions.

So much for the structure of student relocation. Its problems are flesh-and-blood problems of young people who have

STUDENT RELOCATION

come through a period of fear and bewilderment bred in segregated camps behind barbed wire away from the main streams of American life. Evacuation has inevitably produced feelings of bitterness and frustration which have not been easily allayed. Nevertheless, the fears which characterized the early period are gradually being replaced by new hope. The WRA's comprehensive resettlement program has meant that thousands of residents within the camps are being considered for jobs on the "outside"; the Army has recruited Nisei soldiers for combat as well as linguistic service; and the one thousand Nisei now in colleges have found they are pretty much accepted as part of the American scene.

The first fears of the evacuees were matched by the fears of uninformed citizens on the outside. Evacuation, which had been asked of American citizens of Japanese ancestry as a mark of their loyalty, was corrupted in the minds of many other Americans to be a sign of disloyalty. It is not surprising that in the early days of student relocation there were some tensions and a few incidents. One was the famous "battle of Parkville," in which a group of Platte County, Missouri, citizens tried to ban seven West Coast students of Japanese ancestry who had enrolled in Park College. The fight was carried to the board of trustees of the college, which decided after a two and a half hour session to "let the Nisei stay in school because their loyalty is unquestioned." The students themselves welcomed the evacuees, and all six of the undergraduate social clubs "rushed" them.

In another midwestern locality a group of vigilantes threatened to lynch two recently relocated students. While the director was working out the proper strategy to prevent the affair, the potential lynchees visited the vigilantes to protest that they didn't want to be

lynched as they were "citizens and anxious to join the Army when the ban on Nisei had been removed." So convincing was their appeal that the head of the super-patriots offered to beat up anyone molesting the evacuees!

Community acceptance, which at one time was a stumbling block for the relocation program because municipal officials hated to commit themselves before elections, became increasingly easy as students made good records in other communities. Individuals who were hesitant about their new classmates were won over by the fact that they were typically American—interested in activities and well-versed in college tradition and folk customs. The students of Oberlin College in March, 1943, elected Kenji Okuda, late of the University of Washington via the Granada Relocation Center in Colorado, as president of the student council, the highest office in the student body.

IV

The future of the student relocation program depends upon a number of factors.

Scholarship aid, or the lack of it, is the most pressing problem facing the Council today. The thousand relocated students are those who had sufficient funds to pay their own way or were the students who have been helped by the \$200,000 raised in tuition grants, jobs, and scholarships. Another two thousand evacuees, at least three-fourths of whom are first-rate scholars, are unable to continue their education for lack of funds. There is little chance to "save" for it on a wage-scale in the centers of \$12, \$16, and \$19 a month. As outside employment opportunities and scholarships materialize, the program can be speeded up.

The decision of the War Department to recruit Nisei for a special combat team has resulted in over a thousand youths'

COMMON GROUND

enlisting from the relocation centers, though many, like their Caucasian contemporaries, have preferred to wait for the call of their draft boards. Among those enlisting are many potential students, as well as some who have been relocated. But there is still a reservoir of excellent students who for one reason or another will make their contribution outside the armed forces.

Our ability to recognize the significance of our Nisei to our whole war effort is the most important factor in the picture. It is imperative that we keep faith with the Japanese Americans and our common heritage of American justice and democracy. The kind of treatment which we give Orientals in the United States is being watched by our allies in China, India, Africa, and South America as well as by thirteen million citizens of color within our own country. The course we follow with the evacuees will be taken as an index as to the real meaning of our war and peace aims. To an unusual degree the loyal American citizen of Japanese

ancestry is in a position to make a disproportionately high contribution to winning the war and shortening its length. He must interpret us and our essential, if imperfect, democracy to a parent generation which has sometimes felt unjust barriers of race. He must find his place among Caucasian students, workers, and soldiers who do not always understand him because of his heritage. He must use his unique position to help win both the war and a peace which should be lasting. It is America's duty to provide opportunity for her citizens of Japanese ancestry; it is their responsibility to accept that opportunity as functioning Americans who happen to be of Japanese descent.

Robert W. O'Brien is assistant dean of the University of Washington in Seattle. On loan from the University, he served for six months as director of the Student Relocation Council whose work and objectives he describes here.

DEMOCRACY BEGINS AT HOME—II

BLUEPRINT FOR A SLUM

EDDIE SHIMANO

THERE are no sidelines in this war.

To no single racial group in America is this more obvious than to the 110,000 Japanese (70,000 of them American citizens) living in ten relocation centers, torn by doubts, fears, suspicion, unrest, bitterness, pauperism . . . and hope.

The hope is in resettlement.

Now more than a year after the first contingent of evacuees left their homes on the West Coast for concentration

into assembly and then relocation centers, individual resettlement of loyal Japanese Americans has become the established policy of the government, as Robert W. Frase points out earlier in these pages. Such dispersal resettlement, I am convinced, will go far to effect speedily and drastically, with surgical thoroughness and surgical disregard for sentiment, the integration of the Japanese into American life.

BLUEPRINT FOR A SLUM

But it needs to be done fast if potentially valuable individuals are to be salvaged for the nation and for themselves. It is an uphill fight to maintain a balance, a perspective, and a faith, in the nightmare of demoralization and despair that is a relocation center. I know. I know how urgent the situation is. I came out of such a center in February, back to America.

II

The United States government has built, in the past year, ten huge slum areas and called them relocation centers for evacuees.

Barbed wire fences with watch towers and armed guards and searchlights surround an area a mile square set in the middle of a desert or a swamp. In the desert, the fine sand, scuffed and thrown up by trucks and dragging boots, becomes dust—ubiquitous dust that is constantly floating around—in the food, in bed, in clothes, in your mouth and ears and eyes and hair. Typewriters, sewing machines, hair clippers, all become gritty and break down constantly. Fountain pens become clogged and refuse to write. Phonograph records wear out after a few playings. Eyes become inflamed—this is immediate. What happens to lungs cannot be determined so soon. In the swampland, the sticky gumbo mud clings to the boots and clothes. Leather rots. Mud tracked into the barracks dries and turns to dust. One must put on boots to go to meals or to the bathroom.

The barracks are merely bunkrooms. They are built row on row, covered with black tarpaper, unrelieved by any color or individuality. In them live thousands of men, women, and children (at the Denson, Arkansas, center, 34 per cent of the population are school children between 3 and 18 years of age). A family of five lives in a single room, 20 by 24

feet. There is one unshaded ceiling light. There is no running water. During the winter, a heating stove is furnished. Each occupant is entitled to a metal cot, a mattress pad, and two wool blankets. He receives no other furnishings.

This is "home." The occupant must make his own furniture out of scrap lumber and scrap nails. (Scrap lumber was at such a premium when the centers first opened that neighborhood feuds arose between families fighting over a plank found in a ditch.) The interior walls are of plain gypsum boards, looking no worse, no better, than the chicken houses that former poultry raisers had once owned. The floor, after constant mopping with privately owned mops and buckets, becomes warped; large cracks appear between boards. The floor buckles so that furniture rocks back and forth unless judiciously placed. The occupant furnishes his own curtains, sheets, towels, bedspread, partitions within the room, and everything else that is a pretense at making a "home."

There is no privacy. A family of five has a single room. There are common lavatories, shower rooms, toilets, mess halls. The lack of physical privacy extends even to individual thought and action so that there is no individual growth. People stand in line for everything—meals, toilets (when diarrhea hits a hundred people at once), mail, laundry facilities, fire wood, jobs (at \$12, \$16, and \$19 a month).

All of the work, except for camouflage net projects in three of the centers—is solely for center maintenance and seems like "made" work, without meaning or significance, since it does not contribute directly to the war effort. Working rules are contradicted daily; sloppy work habits develop. Initiative among individuals is stifled. There is no training for any constructive future "outside" work.

COMMON GROUND

No evacuee, regardless of competence or experience, is allowed to head a department or division, a policy which not only frustrates any desire on his part to work at his highest skill, but makes him lethargic and allows his skill to deteriorate. In addition, this system makes him so dependent on the "white superior" that a two-faced subservience becomes synonymous with survival.

The educational system is sterile and emasculated. Educational qualifications in the centers must, according to the WRA, meet the minimum educational requirements of the state in which the center is located. Parents of school children coming from California, where the educational requirements are among the highest in the nation, to Arkansas, impoverished and less literate, are dismayed at the prospect of having their children become ineligible for matriculation in first class universities. A more serious fault is that the studies are far removed from realities. In a high school civics class, for instance, the instructor, following the text book, attempted to teach that the United States government is a democratic institution based on the principle "that all men are created equal." The pupils, uprooted from their homes without due process of law, guilty of no crime except being born of Japanese parents, American citizens with no right of appeal, penned in by barbed wire fences, laughed uproariously. The class had to be dismissed. No vocational training directed at a real world is offered.

In the economic field, too, there are obstacles in the path of the evacuees' attempts to make life as normal as possible. Rationing is understood and accepted. But within the field where individual business interest might flourish, under present WRA regulations no private enterprises are allowed, only community co-operatives. Thus the need for barber

shops and beauty parlors, for shoe repair and tailoring shops, laundries, florists (for funerals and weddings occur even in the centers, as in normal towns of 10,000 people), for dry goods and hardware stores and groceries for snacks—all these needs must be met by co-operative enterprises. Co-operatives may be a fine voluntary venture, but they are new to the evacuees and resented because imposed from above. Even here the co-operators are not allowed to erect their own buildings, but must pay the government a rental of 45¢ per square foot. They must also pay their help for doing work which, after all, seems to be the responsibility of the WRA. It is discouraging to evacuees on salaries of \$16 a month to be required to help WRA show a profit on community enterprises.

I stress these physical inconveniences not for their own sake but because they are conducive to the spiritual crack-up that becomes more and more evident in the centers. The most obvious symptom is the growth of adolescent delinquency and a perverted "slum" attitude on the part of the youngsters, a distorted sense of values.

Delinquency in city slums rises out of the loosening, for many easily discernible reasons, of the family tie. In the newly-created government slums, dependency on the government is an added impetus to family disintegration. I heard one 14-year-old boy taken to task by his father for staying out late one night. "Aw, the hell with you," he answered. "The government is taking care of me now. You don't have to pay for my board and room and clothes. I don't have to do anything you say now."

This, in a people formerly famed for filial piety.

Other factors contribute to the break-up. Families do not even eat together, but

BLUEPRINT FOR A SLUM

line up for mass feeding in the mess halls. WRA policy until recently allowed no one but citizens to hold elective position on the Community Councils, the local bodies which govern the welfare of the residents in the centers. This automatically excluded the older parents, who by our laws can never become naturalized citizens since they are Orientals, and elevated the young people to authority. By virtue of government example, teen-aged children assumed the same denial and refused to grant their parents the right to govern even family welfare. Certainly it is tragic and ironic that filial piety and honesty and probity and moral uprightness and community responsibility thus became branded as alien—and therefore bad.

Last Christmas, when groups of evacuees were allowed to go shopping in small towns neighboring the centers, a few of the younger boys openly bragged about the articles they had lifted from the stores. Perhaps a few cases of kleptomania might have been expected, but not the shocking general acceptance of shoplifting by those who heard about it. *These people, before evacuation, as a group, had the lowest delinquency rate in the United States.* Yet now there was no voice lifted loudly in condemnation. Somewhere in the evacuation, they had lost their pride.

Somewhere, too, in this process, they had picked up substitutes for pride, to satisfy their need for a sense of "belonging." Many of the boys in their late teens and up to mid-twenties herded together in pachuco gangs. Younger boys form "junior" gangs, taking on the name of their hero-gang and adding "junior" to it. Composed of from 6 to 20 youths, these gangs give their members a sense of social status through physical power (knives and fists), exclusiveness (the use of uniforms—identical shirts or jackets), and defiance of authority—administrative,

since they identify the administration with evacuation, and parental.

The pachuco gangs, easily spotted in most cases by their "uniforms" and long haircuts and zoot suits, crash social affairs, settle all personal grudges with physical assault, and follow pretty closely the pattern set by other Dead End gangs. A girl on the dance floor, if tagged by a gang member, dare not refuse to dance, for her refusal is a sure guarantee her dancing partner will be beaten up later that night.

The girl of dating age has more difficulty in her search for social status. She joins clubs, of course, and goes to church to meet boys, but these are insufficient. She wants to meet boys on her own. Yet dating at home is almost impossible. Suppose a boy does come to see her.

She is a member of a family of five. Father, mother, the girl, brother, and baby live in a room 20 by 24 feet. Five cots, partitioned off by the mother's ingenuity, take up half the room. Some necessary furniture made of scrap-lumber, clothes, toilet articles, a few family snapshots, perhaps a few books and magazines, crowd the young boy and girl up by the stove. This space they may share with the parents, the younger brother, who is studying his home work, and the baby's diapers hanging up to dry.

Romance? It is hard to find here. They go out for a walk—if the parents are liberal enough to allow this. Otherwise the girl will meet the boy clandestinely. Where to go? A dance? If this is Saturday night. A movie? If this is Wednesday night. There are no soda fountains, no bowling alleys, no clubhouse, nothing but the dark alleys between barracks and the woods beyond the barbed wire fence. Perhaps the girl will be fortunate enough next year to be able to name her baby's father.

Suppose they get married. There can be no honeymoon. No period of privacy

COMMON GROUND

and time to become accustomed to being married. They must face their neighbors and friends the next day still with a feeling of embarrassment. "Making their home" means another barrack, means building scrap-lumber furniture and scraping together makeshift odds and ends. Most of the joys of starting a new home, enjoyed by couples outside, are denied them. It is no wonder that pre-marital and extra-marital sex relations in the centers are becoming so obviously overt.

III

Those of us Nisei who fought for democracy in our civilian life prior to war, when fighting for democracy was something to be sneered at in polite circles, feel we need no alibis for our loyalty.

We remember the fresh bay breeze and seagulls wheeling overhead and the San Francisco Embarcadero traffic stopping and cat-calling to us as we picketed the Japanese ships loading scrap steel and oil . . . and we wonder now what American soldiers stopped that piece of steel with his flesh and blood and bone.

We remember how the shadow of the Japanese Consulate building on Battery Street lengthened as we paced up and down with placards protesting the rape of Nanking and how pedestrians minced by us as if we were unclean . . . and we wonder now how many of them screamed "Once a Jap, always a Jap" when we were evacuated.

We remember the many long hours we sat with the directors of the American Friends of the Chinese People and planned and worked for medical relief for the Chinese soldiers who had just begun their long years of brave struggle against Japanese aggression in China . . . and we wonder who is laughing now at the Chinese soldiers as brigands and hailing the Japanese army as bringers of peace and prosperity to Asia.

Those of us who fought for democracy think we know what it means—but precisely because we know this, and because we know what fascism can be, too, we felt that any sober discussion of our lot in the first year of evacuation when the American people were confused in the direction of the war would have tended only to weaken democracy's fight against fascism.

But now a year and a half has gone by since Pearl Harbor. A year and a half should be sufficient time for hysteria to dissipate itself, for a nation to examine without emotional heat its actions under the first impact of war. There comes a time when to keep silent longer means capitulation to defeat in the battle for democracy. It is time to air the plight of the evacuees for the sake of the internal health of the country as a whole. The evacuees too are America, and what affects one group in the United States adversely ultimately affects all. When citizenship rights of one group are abrogated, by just so much is the base under all citizenship rights weakened.

To the outside world, the signs that all was not serene in the centers were stories of disturbances and riots. These were not unexpected to those aware of the tensions. The regrettable effect of these incidents, however, was that it gave native American fascists another tarbrush with which to paint all Japanese Americans the same black. The irony is that the headlines which played up these race-baiting stories in the daily papers only added fuel to the insidious outhouse whisperings of the few pro-Japanese, pro-Axis elements in the centers, who would also make of this a racial war.

The younger Nisei, not yet firm enough in their convictions or their knowledge of democracy, and understandably embittered by events of the past year, are

BLUEPRINT FOR A SLUM

easily swayed by these Japanese fascists who, in turn, would paint all Americans with the same tarbrush used by native American fascists. But tensions within the centers are not as simple as pro-Americans versus the anti-Americans. It is an over-simplification amounting to outright falsification to think that the elimination of the few Japanese nationalists in the centers would make them utopias.

Cleavages are complicated by many other factors, among them the pre-evacuation records of the evacuees. Business opportunists, who took advantage of the aliens immediately after the outbreak of war by scare stories, have been physically assaulted by their victims. And resentment against Nisei Uncle Toms flared up again in the centers with an over-intensification of racial hyper-sensitivity.

There is anti-administration feeling, which identifies the administrators as Caucasian and therefore superior—and the evacuees as Japanese and therefore inferior. As a result, any sign of friendliness over and above common courtesy shown by any individual evacuee to an administrator is immediately labeled by the anti-administration group as boot-licking—if not renegadism. The anti-administration group is not necessarily the same in makeup as the anti-American group, although many individuals are members of both.

There are other not-so-clearly defined cleavages within the centers. The administration, if it has not frowned on the loyal Americans (proved loyal by actions prior to Pearl Harbor) certainly has ignored them the right to leadership in the centers, preferring to turn to less politically developed, more acquiescent, less accepted Nisei. Morale, consequently, has disintegrated further.

While the churches have played an important part in student relocation and

individual resettlement, within the centers they have not exerted much influence on morale-building and leadership. The vision of the Japanese preachers has been circumscribed not only by the dogma of their church but by all the complexes of a discriminated against race. The churches on the “outside” have too frequently sent one-time missionaries to the centers to preach to the evacuees. Too often these missionaries have gone to Japan to bring enlightenment to the “heathen,” and they have gone into the centers still imbued with the “white man’s burden.” There is much resentment by the Nisei against the church for assuming that Japanese Americans are the same as Japanese in Japan. Condescension or tolerance, when it is acceptance evacuees hunger for, only whips up further antagonism and defiance. And a mere “Let us pray” resignation has been no answer to evacuees who face demoralization and disintegration in the centers. “Let us pray” has not combatted the perverted sense of values growing in these government constructed slums.

Neither has it been an answer to the growing tide of anti-Semitism. This rise of race-baiting stems from the fact that the evacuees were themselves victims of racial discrimination. The recent statement of Lieut. Gen. John L. DeWitt, “A Jap’s a Jap. It doesn’t matter whether he’s an American citizen or not,” serves only as added proof that military necessity was a convenient, if true, excuse for an anti-Japanese pogrom. Faced with a growing bitterness, a drab, dreary future in the centers, denied participation in the war effort, wanting to assert his status, the evacuee in his involution and need of a scapegoat has turned to Jew-baiting.

Unhampered by the fact that there are no individual Jews in the centers, the race-baiters indulge in long-range sniping at the WRA as a Jewish-dominated gov-

COMMON GROUND

ernment organization. They point to Milton Eisenhower (brother of the famed "Ike" Eisenhower of Africa), first director of the WRA, and label the Eisenhower name as Jewish. They also point to Dillon S. Myer, present WRA director, and label the Myer name as Jewish. And before the President's family changed its name, it was, naturally, Rosenfelt—the same familiar pattern of anti-Semitism spread by native fascists before the war.

Negroes, Mexicans, Filipinos, Hindus, and even white trash are disparaged. Especially baited are Koreans—far more so than the Chinese, who, strangely enough, are disliked only for being such "smooth, slick propagandists" while "Korean" becomes synonymous with "informer" or "stooge." Italians in America also are sometimes sneered at as inferior because the Attorney General labeled them as "friendly aliens" and "harmless"—not forcing them to be evacuated.

IV

This is merely a rough introductory picture of what the relocation slums are like. More intensive study of an individual center would reveal frightening conditions which make a place like Jerome, Arkansas, a psychological nightmare and a physical hell-hole. A girl who recently "escaped" from Jerome through resettlement says, "The place has a foreboding air. There's a constant tension of imminent horrors to happen. It made me cringe—I could not feel relaxed and at peace a single moment." A young newspaperman, also released, says, "Everybody with any courage or undistorted vision is attempting to get out. The ones that will be left are those without any guts or with a twisted sense of values or those unable to leave because they can't get leave clearance through suspected loyalty. Then there's that other large group unable to leave because they aren't

employable—the old and infirm and the children. The babies and school kids and the youngsters and their mothers are no more disloyal than those being resettled. They are the innocent sufferers."

Resettlement has so far been pretty slow—evacuees torn between their fear of the "outside" and their horror of the inside. It is urgent that the tempo be speeded up, that evacuees get back into the general stream of American life as soon as possible, that they lose their fears and inhibitions and begin the process of healing that will make them whole and useful individuals once again. The young men of military age who volunteered for the all-Nisei combat unit will go out at once. Others will go out more slowly, as job offers develop. In many cases the husband or son will go first and the women and children follow later. For those who remain in the centers temporarily and for those who are too old and discouraged to strike roots again and will make up a final residue in the camps, some specific measures can be taken to counteract to a degree the evil effects of their slum environment.

Last Christmas many sympathetic people and groups sent toys to the center children. In too many cases this was an easy salve for the conscience—it was an evasion of the solution of the basic problems faced by the 35,000 children under 15 in the centers. It implied an unconscious willingness to accept these government-created slums and utilize them as convenient charity cases by which gift-givers could take a short-cut to Heaven. If, however, the gift-giving were done in addition to other help given the evacuee, as morphine is given a patient to alleviate pain, pending treatment of the patient's basic sickness, then gift-giving serves a salutary purpose.

A simple thing the WRA could do to help would be to return the recreation

BLUEPRINT FOR A SLUM

halls to the people for recreational purposes. These small halls were planned one to a block of 72 units, so that each could serve the 300 people living there. In many centers, however, the halls have been taken over by the administration for administrative and maintenance purposes rather than for direct recreational use by the people. Cabinet shops, dry goods stores, canteens, sign shops, electrical shops, and other maintenance activities keep them from the people.

Once the halls are again open for recreational purposes, each can be fitted up for specific use. One of the most important and immediate needs is a "dating" room. Obviously, if a girl's "home" is no fit place for girl to meet boy, a parlor should be furnished for this purpose. Sponsored by an organization like the YWCA, for example, with a responsible Nisei matron in charge every evening, the parlor could be furnished cozily. Certainly it would be no hardship for friends on the outside to donate living room furniture such as sofas, chairs, and tables, lamps, pictures, curtains, runners, and scatter rugs for such a purpose. Perhaps a few hot plates might be installed for brewing tea or hot chocolate. There need be nothing pretentious about this. The main object would be to make a pleasant and homey place for visiting and normal good fun. It is important, too, that these "dating" parlors be under the proper type of supervision. It would be fatal for such a project to have a prudish overexacting supervisor in charge.

Trained sociologists and social psychologists are needed in the center schools instead of run-of-the-mill teachers. Desire to help is not enough—there must be a corresponding ability to help. True, the school alone cannot cope with delinquency problems; the WRA must see that spare-time activities of youngsters are channeled into salutary paths. Pachuco gangs

can be diverted into wholesome boys' clubs—harmless, at least, if not constructive. But this can be done only if there is competent guidance in the recreation departments of the centers.

Vocational training after school hours would go far toward giving young people some grasp on a bridge to the future, and to some degree nullifying the feeling of utter futility which drives them now to discard the worthwhile for momentary pleasures.

There are other things which can also be done by the WRA—not in any attempt to make center life a normal one—this is impossible—but to alleviate its worst psychological aspects. Take down the barbed wire fences and sentry towers; they will never keep anyone out or in who wants to get over, but the sight of them is a constant humiliation and irritant. Give the Issei more rights and privileges in directing the welfare of the community—and rehabilitate them as heads of their families. Separate the internees, the repatriates, the known nationalists and fascists from the general evacuees. (The differentiation is easy to make and surely in a year and a half should have been accomplished.) Recognize that all cleavages in the centers are not simply pro- and anti-American. Recognize, too, that as long as relocation centers exist, we have a living travesty on the American democratic way of life.

And, above all, get the evacuees out!

Eddie Shimano was editor of the Pace-maker, evacuation center newspaper at Santa Anita, California, and of the Communicative, relocation center paper at Jerome, Arkansas. First of the evacuees in Jerome to volunteer for the all-Nisei combat unit and awaiting induction into the Army, he is now on the staff of COMMON GROUND.

ST. PAUL EXTENDS A HAND

ALICE L. SICKELS

IN welcoming resettled Japanese Americans, St. Paul is living up to its traditions of hospitality and friendliness to people of all nationalities which began a hundred years ago when General Sibley built the first Minnesota mansion on the banks of the Mississippi below the fort. Under his own roof he included an extra room with its own entrance which was never locked, where Indians and voyageurs paddling down the river with their furs could find shelter, food, and companionship. St. Paul's attitude is also in keeping with the spirit of a city which once in three years, even in wartime, dramatizes its belief in the equality of all peoples in a great city-wide Festival of Nations put on by the 33 nationality and cultural groups who, like Japanese Americans now, found a welcome in St. Paul because they had something to contribute and were willing to do their part.

Nine months ago there were only nine adult Japanese and six small children of that race in St. Paul. Three were employed on the private car of the president of the Great Northern Railroad, one family owned a gift shop, one was a butler, and another was a physician who for many years has been the head of the X-ray laboratory of a large hospital.

The first of the Pacific Coast evacuees to arrive in the present program of resettlement were Earl and Ruth Tanbara, who came in August of 1942 with letters of introduction from Miss Annie Clo Watson, executive of the International Institute in San Francisco. Her promise

that they would prove an asset to the community has been more than fulfilled. They have been the best possible ambassadors of goodwill.

In September, a city-wide committee was set up by the St. Paul International Institute to co-operate with the War Relocation Authority in the government's program of resettling evacuees and to serve as a local clearing house for accurate information. This committee, made up of prominent men and women, aimed to do a pioneering job on a case-by-case basis without any publicity except by word of mouth to carefully chosen small groups. Almost from the beginning, the demand for workers exceeded the supply. In the last six months, in addition to about 20 college undergraduates and many household workers who have resettled, jobs have been found for a number of stenographers, nurses' aids, mechanics, lens grinders, janitors, attendants, nurserymen, two chemists, a dressmaker, and a medical technician. In every case, employment was arranged in advance. Job opportunities, requests for resettlement, and notices of arrival are cleared through a three-way process, which includes the Resettlement Committee with headquarters in the International Institute, the regional office of the WRA, and the Japanese American Citizens League, which has recently appointed Earl Tanbara as its representative in this area. Problems of social adjustment are referred to the International Institute case worker.

The dormitories of the YWCA, the

ST. PAUL EXTENDS A HAND

Catholic Guild Hall, the Methodist Girls Club, and the YMCA are open to the Japanese Americans on arrival. The committee then locates single rooms in private homes; due to scarcity, furnished apartments are hard to find for anyone. The housing committee is careful not to allow the Nisei to take rooms in undesirable districts or to congregate in one neighborhood.

The new arrivals are encouraged to join existing clubs and classes and participate in social events. Seven couples recently joined people of many other nationalities in the All-Nations Ball which was attended by the Lieutenant Governor and city officials. They were cordially received by everyone, including a group of 20 Chinese Americans. Few of the Nisei fit the old stereotyped notion of a "Japanese type." They pass largely unnoticed in a city where there have always been a few Chinese, and where at first glance the curly-haired Nisei girls seem not unlike some of the local Mexican Americans.

The newcomers have, of course, experienced annoyances incidental to migration, and have had to make many adjustments. They have been lonesome—at least until they met some of the Nisei soldiers from the Army Language School at Camp Savage, nearby; the winter has been severe. Those who made their own arrangements and took any sort of job just to get out of the centers have sometimes been disappointed. Among the first arrivals were household workers recom-

mended to old St. Paul families by friends in California. Many of the descendants of these first families prefer to live in their ancestral homes near the center of the city rather than move to the newer residential districts. Their three-story mansions, with rather dark interiors, much heirloom furniture, many pictures and art objects, were at first somewhat appalling to girls whose traditional idea of beauty is studied simplicity and who had formerly been employed in bungalows or compact two-story houses. The St. Paul winter diet and rich desserts took longer to prepare than Pacific Coast meals of sea foods, fresh vegetables, and fruits. Many an experienced cook felt suddenly inferior because she had never learned to make a pie or bake bread. Salaries and wages have not been too high, but are partly compensated for by lower living costs compared with other midwestern cities.

In general, the Japanese Americans have expressed surprise and pleasure at their reception and life in St. Paul. First to venture out of the comparative, if narrowing, security of the relocation centers, they have truly been pioneers. On the whole, they have found the city friendly and fair. For St. Paul has realized that these new arrivals will be an asset. Their skills are needed.

Alice L. Sickels is executive of the International Institute in St. Paul and secretary of the St. Paul Resettlement Committee.

MADAM TO YOU!

LANGSTON HUGHES

*Four Poems Concerning
the Life and Times of
Alberta K.*

MADAM'S PAST HISTORY

My name is Johnson,
Madam Alberta K.
The Madam stands for business.
I'm smart that way.

I had a
HAIR-DRESSING PARLOR
Before
The depression put
The prices lower.

Then I had a
BARBECUE STAND
Till I got mixed up
With a no-good man.

Cause I had a insurance
The WPA
Said, We can't use you
Wealthy that way.

I said,
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT ME!
Just like the song,
Take care of yourself—
And I'll get along.

I do cooking,
Day's work, too!
Alberta K. Johnson—
Madam to you.



MADAM AND THE ARMY

They put my boy-friend
In 1-A.
But I can't figure out
How he got that way.

He wouldn't work,
Said he wasn't able.
Just drug himself
To the dinner table.

Couldn't get on relief,
Neither WPA.
He wouldn't even try
Cause he slept all day.

I nagged at him
Till I thought he was deaf—
But I never could get him
Above 4-F.

But Uncle Sam
Put him in 1-A
And now has taken
That man away.

If Uncle Sam
Makes him lift a hand,
Uncle's really
A powerful man!



MADAM AND HER MADAM

I worked for a woman,
She wasn't mean—
But she had a twelve-room
House to clean.

Had to get breakfast,
Dinner, and supper, too—
Then take care of her children
When I got through.

Wash, iron, and scrub,
Walk the dog around—
It was too much,
Nearly broke me down.

I said, Madam,
Can it be
You trying to make a
Pack-horse out of me?

She opened her mouth.
She cried, Oh, no!
You know, Alberta,
I love you so!

I said, Madam,
That may be true—
But I'll be dogged
If I love you!



MADAM AND THE MOVIES

I go to the movies
Once-twice a week.
I love romance.
That's where I'm weak.

But I never could
Understand
Why real life ain't got
No romance-man.

I pay my quarter
And for two hours
Romance reigns
And true love flowers.

Then I come home
And unlock the door—
And there ain't no
Romance any more.



Langston Hughes is on the editorial board of CG. The artist is E. Simms Campbell.

HOLLYWOOD AND THE AMERICAN SCENE

EZRA GOODMAN

ONE OF the sources of information on the United States is Hollywood. At times I believe it is the most harmful," writes Luis Quintanilla in *A Latin American Speaks*. "Hollywood films are superficial. They seem to be made for a prosperous, happy-go-lucky people who attend the movies simply to relax and be amused. Foreigners who see one after another of these trivial films end by consciously forming the opinion that Americans never go deep into life; that Americans are good-looking and good-natured, but childish and silly. This emphasis on physical glamour and happy endings should be modified. As you have successfully done in some of your great films, show us more real and less conventional aspects of your everyday life. We are sick of melodrama, baby talk, and 'million dollar' super-productions. We know that life is not always smooth or beautiful; but we know also that we can always discover beauty in it. And you know it too. There is not a natural feeling which you could not share with us."

Campbell Dixon in the *London Daily Telegraph* reacts similarly. "Millions of Britons visualize America as a vast Dead End," he writes, "where you run grave risk of being sandbagged at every corner, and tough guys of twelve beat up their mothers. Millions of others see it as a streamlined paradise, where the average housewife lives in a penthouse, drives a glittering motorcar, and has the washing-up done by a machine while she listens to a chromium-plated radio and

entertains a typist in sables, a chorus girl in trouble, and Mrs. Astor. Hollywood's picture of the United States is fitting in beautifully with Dr. Goebbels' picture of the corrupt and lawless plutocracy. Surely it is not taking the screen too seriously if we agree that jests of such proportion are too dangerous to be funny. We do not want all our films to be social documents or propaganda, but we have the right to ask that a good proportion reflect our world as it is."

These two indictments of Hollywood for its misrepresentation of the American scene emphasize the dual fallacy of American motion pictures. For not only do our movies misrepresent America to millions of domestic moviegoers but also to the many millions more who see Hollywood motion pictures abroad. Hollywood—and this, I believe, is a justified criticism—has never fairly and squarely faced its own times and its own place. It has operated in a never-never land, an ivory tower removed from the wants, fears, desires, and joys of the great mass of people who constitute its audience. And this is an ironic fact, for the people who go to motion pictures and support them are the very Joe Smiths and John Does whose lives and deepest aspirations have never been articulated on the screen.

In its half century history, the American motion picture has pretty thoroughly removed itself from the average man and his way of life. It has sought its heroes and its settings elsewhere. The distorted view

of our national scene which has resulted has not been conducive to selling our democratic way of life to the rest of the world. For better or worse, our movies are ambassadors of good or bad will to moviegoers abroad. Audiences from Australia to Buenos Aires get their mental picture of the United States from our films. It has been one of gunmen, blondes, cowboys, Indians, and chorus girls, most of whom live in resplendent suites overlooking Central Park South in Manhattan or on palatial western ranches. All this may seem very fanciful and pleasant, but it happens to be untrue, more than ever today when millions of people are looking toward us, hungry for an affirmation of a way of life that has some connection with reality. It doesn't seem very probable that seeing Hollywood pictures with beautifully gowned women, night clubs going full blast, and everyone wearing a platinum-plated watch will lead them to think the United States is particularly interested in the century of the common man.

Hollywood spends hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for hit plays and novels. Certainly there is room for adaptations of literary and dramatic works to the screen, but not to the virtual exclusion of all other sources of film fare. And such sources are vast and practically untapped. They lie at the very doorsteps of the movie makers, begging for some form of expression on celluloid. These sources—in a nutshell—are America, and all its rich funds of history, lore, legends, and contemporary vitality, everything from Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Declaration of Interdependence. And there are a lot of things in between—not the cinematic simperings of half-baked Hollywood writers—but the incalculably splendid and complex ways and people of American life. Has there yet

been a good motion picture about the American Negro, the American Jew, the American Swede, Irishman, or Italian? Has there been a good movie about workmen, unions, modern industry, railroads, or the millions of little people who are the backbone of this great nation? All the world's a stage, but Hollywood is still setting up its klieglights and cameras in the murk of crumbling ivory towers.

The Hollywood hero is usually the handsome, collar-ad leading man, with a faultless dinner jacket and a toothpaste smile. He has no visible means of support because he doesn't have to work for a living—he comes from a well-to-do family. In war pictures the hero is usually the captain, the pilot, the commissioned officer—not the private or the man in overalls. Hollywood shies from colored people, from "minorities," from any subject that requires some profundity of treatment. According to the Hollywood mind, all is gold that glitters.

All one has to do to bear out these arguments is to look back rapidly over the screen's past history. Hollywood's very first "big" feature film, *The Birth of a Nation*, set off a controversy that still has not died down today, by depicting the Negro as a terroristic menace. Recent pictures like *Gone With the Wind*, *So Red the Rose*, and *Tales of Manhattan* have pictured the Negro as a superstitious, cringing, singing, dancing, carefree character whose eyes lolled in almost constant fright or happy abandon. Among the few attempts to portray the Negro honestly were King Vidor's *Hallelujah*, which bogged down in a maze of melodrama; *They Won't Forget*, which had a relentless picture of a persecuted Negro janitor confronted with a lynching; and *In This Our Life*, which was noteworthy for the inclusion in its cast of an intelligent southern Negro youth studying for one of the professions.

HOLLYWOOD AND THE AMERICAN SCENE

"We're not asking for any special favors for Negro performers," a leading Negro journalist said recently. "All we ask is that the Negro be portrayed as a normal person, with normal emotions, ambitions, and desires. Let's see the Negro as a worker at a union meeting, as a voter at the polls, as a civil service worker, or an elected official."

And yet the two new all-Negro musical films, *Cabin in the Sky* and *Stormy Weather*, are in the same "happy-little-chillun" jive groove as their predecessors. M-G-M recently junked the finished script of *Liberty Ship*, dealing with four shipyard workers, one of whom was a Negro facing discrimination. But, contradictorily enough, that same M-G-M has done a great service to the Negro cause by casting Kenneth Spencer as one of the heroes of *Bataan Patrol*. And the forthcoming Columbia film, *Somewhere in Sahara*, will find Rex Ingram on equal footing with the white characters in the picture, which deals with a tank unit in the African desert.

The Negro is by no means the only villain in Hollywood. All colored peoples are the victims of screen jibes and distortions. A Chinese, whether he be the subject of a picture like *China Girl* or a Charlie Chan film, is either a quaint, Confucius-spouting character, or an opium-smoking wretch. Mexicans have been Hollywood's proverbial villains. The movie producers have found it convenient to cast them as dastardly no-goods, particularly in Westerns. Recently, a directive went out to Hollywood from the Office of War Information ordering that Mexicans no longer be characterized as desperados and villains. The government also had to order Samuel Goldwyn to withdraw his picture *The Real Glory*, which portrayed Filipinos as "heavies."

The American small town has been sugared over for the screen. The Andy

Hardy series, one of Hollywood's most popular products for several years now, is a saccharine, stereotyped picture of what the movie makers imagine life to be in an average American community. But even screen audiences have begun to rebel at this diet of unadulterated glucose, and the Andy Hardy series is now showing signs of coming to an end. The more perceptive pictures of small-town life, like *Our Town* and *A Man to Remember*, have been few. William Saroyan's *The Human Comedy*, though containing many fine things, particularly in its characterization of children, was an over-sentimentalized and prettified film of a small town, resulting in neither good allegory nor good realism.

The rich lore of American history has been widely distorted and falsified by Hollywood. Historical fact, as viewed by the Hollywood producer, is merely something to be conveniently juggled to set off a boy-meets-girl plot. Pictures like *Virginia City*, *Dodge City*, *Brigham Young*, *Union Pacific*, *Northwest Passage*, and many others have been ludicrously fallacious. The irony of the situation is that millions of moviegoers get their so-called historical facts from such pictures. What makes this incomprehensible is that the facts are so much more interesting and vivid than the Hollywood version. Furthermore, such vital themes as that of Columbus and the American Revolution have been almost entirely neglected.

Along these lines, the Western picture has done much to give city-dwelling Americans and foreign moviegoers an entirely wrong conception of what life is like in the wide spaces of the United States. Pictures such as *The Covered Wagon* and *Stagecoach*, which were intelligently and honestly conceived, are greatly outnumbered by Westerns in which the Indian is vilified as the unregenerate blackguard of American history,

COMMON GROUND

attacking wagon trains and slaughtering women and children. Hollywood has stuck to its story, in spite of the historical facts which prove the Indian was not the scoundrel he is reputed to have been and that the white man was frequently to blame. Most current Westerns are amiable extravaganzas in which a hero on a white horse foils a gang of villains, while everyone else stands about strumming guitars.

The Latin American cinema situation has long been a touchy one. As a result of pictures like *La Cucaracha* and *Down Argentine Way*, which were completely phony films of South American life, there was much antagonism to Hollywood productions south of the border. Today the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs works closely with Hollywood producers on pictures destined for the South American market. Walt Disney's *Saludos Amigos* was the first feature film effort resulting from this collaboration.

The best and truest pictures of American life have, contradictorily enough, been the most unflattering ones. They have been the pictures of protest, and most of them were made in the early '30s by Warner Brothers, which has constantly been the most progressive of the Hollywood studios. In films like *Wild Boys of the Road* (homelessness caused by unemployment), *Black Fury* (mining conditions), *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* (southern penal conditions), and *Public Enemy* and *Little Caesar* (gangsterism), a sincere and honest attempt was made to mirror existing situations. Pictures like *Fury* and *You Live Only Once* (crime and lynching), *Grapes of Wrath* (Okies), *Our Daily Bread* (community farming), and *Joe Smith, American* (defense work) were also worthy efforts. Some of Frank Capra's pictures like *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *It Hap-*

pened One Night were interesting, if romanticized, depictions of phases of American life.

There is much that Hollywood has yet to consider in the American scene. One of these is the menace of fascism on the home front. Frank Capra's *Meet John Doe* was a hesitant beginning, but it was afraid even to use the word "fascist" and became lost in its own uncertainties. A brave picture of several years ago on this theme was *Black Legion*, dealing with the Ku Klux Klan. M-G-M's *Keeper of the Flame* is probably the best of the films on this subject to date. It is an admirably sustained drama about an American brand of dictator, and it has some very explicit things to say on the subject, as penned by Donald Ogden Stewart. Warners' *Watch on the Rhine*, based on Lillian Hellman's play, will soon be shown on the nation's screens and is something to watch for.

The producers are only partly to blame for this pussy-footing on a subject like native fascism. As much to blame is the Hays Office, which is the motion picture industry's self-censor. The Hays Office was originally founded by the various studios to anticipate protests of pressure groups throughout the country, and was intended mainly as a guardian of movie morals. For this reason it formulated the Purity Code, which helps guide producers on subjects dealing with sex. The Hays Office also goes over each script prior to production with a blue pencil and makes eliminations and suggestions. But the Hays Office in recent years has branched out into political as well as moral matters. It will not, for instance, allow a realistic depiction of death on the screen. A death scene has to be glossed over quickly. This has robbed many pictures dealing with war of much of their effectiveness and power. The Hays Office also demanded recently that

HOLLYWOOD AND THE AMERICAN SCENE

the anti-Nazi hero of *Watch on the Rhine* be punished for killing a Nazi (since murder must always be punished on the screen). This, of course, would have killed the entire point of the picture, and Warner Brothers refused to knuckle under. M-G-M was also ordered by the Hays censors to punish the English protagonist of *Above Suspicion* for killing a Nazi because the murder was done for "personal reasons" and before war was declared. M-G-M also protested and managed to get its own way.

The State Department and the Office of War Information have not been entirely blameless either, in spite of their good work on the whole. The State Department ordered Warners to shelve the completed picture *Princess O'Rourke*, because it spoofed European royalty. But the film will now probably be released. A government edict prevented several studios from making planned pictures about the Fighting French, for political reasons. The projected film version of *Brooklyn, U.S.A.* was killed by both the Hays Office and the Office of War Information on the grounds that it dealt with American fascism and would not be diplomatic at this time. The OWI also refused to ship *Meet John Doe* abroad recently because it treated of the same theme.

Among pictures dealing with American subjects to which to look forward is *The More the Merrier*, a brilliant satire on crowded war conditions in Washington, D.C., made by one of Hollywood's best younger directors, George Stevens, and starring Joel McCrea, Jean Arthur, and Charles Coburn. Warners is soon to release the film version of Irving Berlin's all-soldier show, *This Is the Army*. Action in the North Atlantic is a sober and realistic depiction of the American merchant marine. King Vidor is now filming his long-delayed picture *America*, dealing

with the rise of an immigrant Czech family from 1898 to the present. *America*, Vidor promises, will include much documentary material on such industries as mining, steel, automobile, shipbuilding, and aircraft. It will also treat of the education of an immigrant to such matters as citizenship and unionization, and is intended as an inspirational picture on the subject. Louis Adamic worked with Vidor for some months as consultant.

Without question the screen can contribute intelligently to the betterment of the world by telling its audiences the truth about themselves and the world about them. *Fortune Magazine* in a recent survey disproved the old bromide about the average moviegoer's having a 13-year-old intelligence. Audiences have responded to the better films with enthusiasm. It is up to Hollywood now to do its share. There are many announcements by the studios of pictures dealing with such grandiose themes as the world of tomorrow and the century of the common man. These could be important. But most of them finally emerge as just plain common, because they have no respect either for their audiences or their subject matter. There is always a blonde somewhere in the bomber, or a pat ending in the offing.

The material for the cameras is lying right in the studios' own back yard—which is America. It is time the movie makers trained their lenses upon the colorful passing parade, instead of focusing them upon castles in the clouds.

With this article Ezra Goodman begins a regular commentary in our pages on the motion pictures as they affect those aspects of the American scene with which CG is most concerned. Mr. Goodman has written extensively on the films for the *New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune*.

STEPPE CHILDREN OF THE CZAR

GRACE CABLE KEROHER

A MAJESTIC brown stone cathedral rearing its twin spires in a dominating gesture over the countryside, a sprawling village of crooked streets and plain box-like houses, carpets of green wheat stretching away to the rim of the distant horizon—these are parts of a bright episode in the pageant of Kansas, the quiet and unassuming conquest of the arid plains by “Rooshan” wheat farmers and the making of Americans on the prairie. “Steppe children” of the Czar, these peasant people trekked halfway around the world from the broad steppes of eastern Russia, near the place where Europe merges into Asia, to the new frontier of western Kansas in search of peace and liberty.

Their story—like that of other Kansas groups—has its roots in central Europe, back in the days of energetic Catherine the Great, whose driving ambition it was to make her reign the most outstanding of Russian history. Catherine met her “national emergency” by the introduction of western civilization. She threw open the crown lands of south and east Russia—territory acquired at the expense of Turkey—to colonization by Germans. Caught in the chaos of the depression which followed the Seven Years War, these people saw in Catherine’s liberal “manifesto” a hope of freedom to develop economic independence, to worship as they pleased, to build their own churches with lofty bell towers and maintain their own schools, to be free of military service.

Accompanied by their priests, colonists streamed together by groups, by families, by congregations, and even by whole villages, overland across the barren steppes and down the Volga River to the provinces of Samara and Saratov. Instead of a region “flowing with milk and honey” as the Russian emissaries had pictured it, it proved to be nothing but a desolate expanse of waste land cut by the broad and sluggish Volga River and bordered on the far side by the rugged ranges of the Urals.

For more than a century, guided by devout and sympathetic priests, farmer and artisan alike worked and saved and built. The once desolate waste land on the *Wieseseite*, meadow side, and the *Bergseite*, mountain side, of the Volga became a prosperous farming region with little villages clustered around lofty-spired churches. Here, far on the outskirts of civilization, their only neighbors the wandering Kirghez hordes from whom they were forced to defend themselves, they lived an isolated life. There was no opportunity to mingle with neighbors or develop a national spirit. Their native language, their customs, and the rich folklore of their German forefathers were thus scrupulously preserved.

But one important change the century witnessed—the slow and steady growth of their love of liberty. Faced with the hardships of pioneering and often with the necessity of fighting for life itself, they had learned to think and act for themselves. They were teaching their children the meaning of liberty.

STEPPE CHILDREN OF THE CZAR

When in 1871 the Czar issued an imperial order rescinding the "manifesto" and proclaiming thereafter, "One Czar, one language, one religion, and compulsory military service," "liberty" became the word on every tongue, the theme of every discussion. The idea of military service might have been accepted but for the discrimination which accompanied it. None but members of the orthodox Russian church could rise to the rank of an officer, and soldiers of unorthodox faith were denied the privileges of attending services of their own religion. Whole-souled in the matter of their faith, the people were faced with the hard choice of surrendering their "liberty" to the will of the imperial Russian government or of leaving the country.

A mass meeting, attended by thousands of interested people, was held at Herzog to discuss the subject of emigration. To the meeting came Balthasar Brungardt, bringing with him his geography book. At the Seminary at Saratov he had studied geography under an American, Professor Stelling, the son of a '49er, who had delighted his students with stories of America. Now Balthasar talked about America and his people listened. Here, he explained, pointing on the map to the great area between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, he was certain they could find suitable land. A committee, its expenses to be paid by the community, was elected to go there in search of a place to live.

There were five delegates, rough men, dressed in homespun. They pulled on furlined boots, donned heavy sheepskin coats, swung their knapsacks over their shoulders, and set out to tour America. When they came to Kansas, they pushed westward along the Kansas Pacific Railroad up the valley of the Smoky Hill River. One day they topped a ridge and looked out across the vast reaches of gently roll-

ing prairie where the lazy Smoky Hill coursed silver among the low hills that skirted its banks. Maybe it was homesickness that tugged at their hearts, but there seemed to be something about these grass covered hills that melted away into fuzzy purple haze on the horizon that reminded them of the low hills on the Wieseseite of the Volga. They stooped down and examined the soil, rubbed it between their strong hands to feel its texture, carefully spaded up samples of it and masticated it to see if it "tasted after grain."

They were satisfied. They filled a jar with a sample of the soil, collected big handfuls of the prairie grass, took some descriptive literature of the country and some specimens of paper money, and returned to Russia to report.

The land, they said, was good. There was plenty of it and it was cheap. They could buy it for themselves. In this land there was "liberty," no religious prejudices, no compulsory military service. A matter of grave concern was that "in these United States the farmers live on their farms and not in villages." But they could remedy that.

In February, 1876, Big Timber Creek was frozen over, and a bitter northwest wind carried the tang of an approaching blizzard. A long wagon train creaked and jolted over the hummocky prairie and pulled to a stop on the bank of the creek. Before the blizzard swept in that night, a row of rude board tents, roofed by saplings gathered from the creek bank, had been put up. The first "Rooshan" families had arrived.

They were an odd assortment—big men, bulky in their great sheepskin coats, wearing full beards and long hair that fell to their shoulders; women and girls with fringed shawls tied over their heads, in somber dresses with voluminous skirts held with a tight belt.

COMMON GROUND

Accustomed as they were to the rigid winters on the arid steppes of Russia, their men came prepared to meet similar conditions on the western plains. Their long sheepskin coats, which they belted closely about their waists, were built "with the fleshy side out, and the wooly side in." On

houses, dozens of them, little square box-like structures with sharp-peaked roofs, and painted them in bright blues, pinks, and greens. Solid, heavy, wooden shutters protected the windows from the cold wind in winter and the hot sun in summer. Built with their backs sheer with the



their heads they wore a carduse, a high elliptical fur cap with flaps to keep the ears warm. They stuffed their trouser legs down into "shafts" on their high felt boots, gaily embroidered in silk.

But it was more than clothing that made the "Rooshans" conspicuous. It was the way they contrasted with their nearest neighbors—a colony of wealthy English gentlemen, mostly "remittance men," many of them of the nobility, who built handsome country places with elaborate wine cellars. They organized a "hunt club," imported sleek hounds and red hunting coats, and carried on the chase as they had at home. They made a lake by building a dam across Big Creek and in their steamboat, the *Betty Bascom*, they plied the bounding prairie.

A mile north of Victoria, the Englishmen's village, the German-Russians bought a section of land. In compliance with their request, the land commissioner divided the section into forty acre strips running east and west. Ownership of the land was then determined by casting lots. Along one end of the section they staked out their village, Herzog. They built their

street, they faced into a rectangle courtyard, a carry-over arrangement from the days in Russia when this contributed to easier defense. Each morning, just as in Russia, the men went out to the fields to work and returned to the village at night.

The "big rush" of immigration lasted for several months. Group after group arrived, bought up sections of land and established villages which they named in memory of the homes they had left—Catherine, Liebethal, Schoenegen, Marienthal, Munjor, Pfeifer.

Unlike the happy-go-lucky English lads, the "Rooshans" had no remittances coming from the old country. They were on their own. What little money they had had been used up for transportation and down payments on their land. They knew from experience, however, that by thrift and co-operation it was possible to win on the prairie by "planting, sowing, and sometimes reaping." So they settled down to the solid business of simple living and broke the prairies for wheat.

Ingenuity was the prime factor in solving the problems of frontier living. Obtaining fuel in a treeless country was an

STEPPE CHILDREN OF THE CZAR

ever-present problem. They solved the difficulty by utilizing a by-product of the farm, *mist-holz* or manure-wood. This fuel was prepared by letting the barnyard manure heat and decompose to a certain degree, when it was spread out in a plot ten or twelve inches thick and tramped down by the horses, allowed to dry, and then cut into blocks. Even today it is not uncommon to see the winter's supply of fuel in the form of cow chips and *mist-holz* stacked neatly behind the farm house.

Drought in the "black year of 1880" ruined the crops. As soon as the men realized the crops were lost, they began plowing for the next year. That winter they rode or walked to Colorado, worked on the railroad, and sent their money home to their families. Most of the fields that produced the next year were sowed and harvested by the women and boys.

Opportunity came in an unexpected way. The English gentlemen wearied of the drought and grasshoppers. The novelty of chasing jack rabbits over the parched prairies soon palled upon them and they were anxious to leave. The thrifty "Rooshans," who had soon acquired a reputation for "paying and saving," counted their coins and bought out the disgruntled English for little or almost nothing.

Though the Russian village system of living had been adopted as a defense measure on the American frontier, the roving marauders they had feared were never encountered. There might have been danger had it been generally known that these new settlers harbored a deep fear of banks and demanded their money in silver coins, which they cached away in an old boot under the floor of the house. No thief ever suspected the wealth that at one time lay buried beneath the floors of these unpretentious box-houses. Since the men usually carried huge sums of money with them, the womenfolk

equipped their trousers with special "money-pockets" large enough to hold a peck or more of coins. Old-timers chuckle over the story of one man who went to church carrying his money, some \$12,000, in a tin breadbox. He forgot the box in church. His brother-in-law, who found the money, put it in his wagon and started to drive over with it. Halfway there he met the owner coming posthaste to get his change.

"Man shall not live by bread alone," it is written. Here were simple, devout farmer people who felt a daily need for "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Although Ellis County, 1876, was only bare unbroken prairie and the nearest Catholic church was in Salina, more than one hundred miles away, they insisted upon the fulfillment of their church duties. Plans were made at once for churches, but churches could not be built overnight and prayers must be prayed every day. So, at a convenient spot in each village, a large wooden cross was set up. Here, on Sundays and church holidays, men, women, and children gathered, knelt on the prairie grass, and, in deep reverence, said the rosary, the prayers of the Mass, and the litanies. For nearly three years no priests visited the settlements, but in their absence laymen conducted the church services.

When, in 1879, the Capuchian Fathers accepted the call to guide the spiritual destinies of these German-Russian settlers, they found parishioners whose attendance at church services was exemplary, who were eager and hungry for leadership. Church building programs were launched. In a few years the chief edifice in every village was a great stone church, its lofty spire pointing toward Heaven.

A visit from the bishop was an honored occasion, and an escort always rode out to meet him. These *vorreiters*, young men on

COMMON GROUND

horse back, their horse's bridles decorated with bright ribbons, galloped before the bishop's carriage. Once, when the Rt. Reverend J. J. Hennessey visited the parishes, more than one hundred and fifty riders escorted him on the nine-mile ride from Munjor to Herzog.

"Pure religion" called for attendance at all special churchdays. On St. Mark, Rogation days, and Corpus Christi, every man, woman, and child gathered at the churches to participate in the traditional services. A great procession, miles in length, made up of work-roughened men in high-necked smock-like shirts, women and girls wearing gay embroidered aprons over dark dresses, and decorous children, would file from the church, wind slowly across the countryside, and make a circuit of the neighboring villages. While a choir sang Latin and German hymns, the marchers solemnly recited the rosary and the litanies. On one occasion the procession from Catherine terminated in Herzog, a distance of nearly ten miles. Even today it is not uncommon for a procession to be more than a mile in length.

But the life of the pioneers was far from drab and dull. Observance of cherished customs added a special flavor and richness to every social gathering. A wedding was a gala occasion. Most of them occurred during the winter, for this was the leisure season and there was more time for celebration. Deputed by the fathers of the couple, two young men, carrying canes to which ribbons were attached, walked through the colony and invited the chosen guests. On the evening before the wedding there was music, dancing, and general merry-making. Guns fired on the morning of the wedding marked the beginning of the ceremony in the church, the young couple knelt on a cloth spread on the floor, and, facing each other with hands joined, received the blessing of parents and relatives.

The bridal dinner was an elaborate affair. The usual custom was to cook the food in large kettles on the open fireplace and allow the guests to help themselves. During the dinner the bride was robbed of her shoe. The best man must redeem it with money. After the dinner the bride and groom led the guests in a dance during which presents were pinned to her dress.

Aside from the regular church observances of Holy Week and Easter, the children observed the appearance of the Oster-Haas—the Easter rabbit. Every child prepared a nest near the house. At dawn they would be aroused from sleep by the cry: "*Der Haas hat shon gelegt!*—The rabbit has laid!"—and there would be a scramble to get the eggs and presents from the nest.

On New Year's, children and young people went from house to house visiting friends and wishing them a happy New Year with the traditional greeting which, translated, means, "I wish you a Happy New Year, long life, health, peace and unity, after death eternal happiness."

The Christmas message of "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men" was taken to heart and interpreted literally. On the eve of Christmas the entire community gathered by families to attend the midnight service. Brothers and their wives first went to the home of the youngest married brother. (Girls who married were included in their husband's families.) There they would leave presents, visit a while, pack up, proceed to the next brother's house, collect his family, and continue until every home had been visited. Then the whole family went on to the parents' home. At this family reunion, a woman in white with a girdle of blue, with her face veiled, appeared as herald of the "*Christ Kindlein.*" She would ring a tiny bell and enter the house reciting, "*Gelobt sei Jesus Christus.*" She would inquire for the youngest child, ask it to say a prayer, then give it a

STEPPE CHILDREN OF THE CZAR

present. This was the time when the older children who had been especially unruly might expect to be chastised for their misdemeanors.

Then it was time for church services and the family went as a group. When the services were over, all of them returned home with their parents. There the customary toasts were drunk. There, too, Father called every one to account. If there were debts, they must be paid. All hard feelings and misunderstandings must be cleared up. When the family gathering broke up in the gray dawn of Christmas morning, brother was at peace with brother and there was "goodwill toward men." This good old Christmas custom has not been discarded completely.

Nearly seventy years have passed since that day in February when the first German-Russian immigrants set up their make-shift houses on the bank of Big Timber Creek. The land is now a prosperous farming community in the heart of the great wheat belt.

The people, a community of some 50,000 persons, have remained, for the most part, close to the soil. Although many of the younger people have entered various professions, a conservative estimate reveals that more than seventy-five per cent of the land under cultivation in Ellis County and immediate vicinity is owned by people of German-Russian descent who have now become an integral part of Kansas.

The little villages with the foreign names are still there, but they have ceased to grow and are inhabited, for the most part, by the older people who have retired and turned their farms over to their sons. The villages now resemble many other small towns of Kansas except that each is crowned by a lofty-towered, great stone church, its architecture reminiscent of middle Europe. The presence on the bare

windy prairie of such architectural achievements as the Gothic twin-spired St. Catherine's church at Catherine, and Pfeifer's mighty three-steepled Church of the Holy Cross never ceases to be a source of wonder. Over the main entrance of the latter is a mosaic by Brachi, a Venetian artist,



which pictures the return of Christ as the judge of mankind. On the tile floor in the entrance an inscription reads: "*Mein Haus ist ein Bethaus*—My house is a house of prayer." Within, stands the large wooden cross before which the congregation had knelt in prayer in the days when they had no church.

These mighty churches, which dwarf the towns beside them into insignificance, tell the story of a people whose religion meant much in their daily lives and who gave freely of their possessions to build them. As German-Russian Herzog continued to grow, it edged to the south until it lay alongside English Victoria. Then the two villages joined, connected by a street called "Crooked," and Herzog be-

COMMON GROUND

came Victoria. Now a rambling village of less than one thousand population, Victoria reveals the interesting story of its split personality. Business is concentrated in the old Victoria section, but the Herzog part, with its dog-legged streets and its houses that face backwards, became the site of one of the most extensive church building projects west of the Mississippi River.

It is a far cry from the crude wooden cross on the open prairie and the little "lean-to-church" built against the dwelling house of Alois Dreiling to majestic St. Fidelis, "Cathedral of the Plains." Romanesque in its styling, built of native brown limestone, 221 feet long and in transept 107 feet, it rises magnificently above the low-lying town that surrounds it. Miles away, long before any town is in sight, the tall 150-foot towers of St. Fidelis loom up like huge sentinels guarding the wide prairie.

Near the Church, the monastery of the Capuchian Fathers, the nunnery, the parochial school, the modern high school, all attest the high place the church holds in the life of the community.

The younger generation is in many ways moving rapidly away from the customs of their grandfathers. Although it looks back with respect upon the old ceremonies and festivities, it is in large measure discarding the old German culture

and substituting the American, which is, after all, a blend of everything. The very old people who meet in the towns and play cards, sing the old songs, and retell stories of the old days, view this change with a twinge of almost tragic regret, even though before the turn of the century the majority of them had become naturalized citizens. Yet while this young generation may have broken traditions, discarded old customs, and changed its language, it has retained one thing that makes its life rich—a deep devotion and loyalty to the faith of the older generation. Almost to a man these young people have remained with the church and, like their pioneer grandfathers, their church attendance is exemplary.

On Sundays, when the big bells of St. Fidelis peal out the call to worship, old and young gather in its mighty hush. There, as they kneel in prayer in the soft light that streams through the colored windows, they know the serenity, peace, and freedom their peasant fathers failed to find even on the outskirts of the Old World.

Grace Cable Keroher is making a study of various immigrant groups in Kansas. Another, on the Mennonites, appeared in our Autumn 1942 issue under the title, "Plowing the Dew Under."

Kurt Werth is the illustrator.

AMERICA'S FOLK MUSIC

DAVID EWEN

IT IS of comparatively recent date that we have become aware of the wonderful storehouse of folk music America has been erecting for more than a century. A long line of scholars and musicologists—John A. Lomax, Cecil Sharp, Franz Rickaby, E. Linscott, P. E. Barry, Dorothy Scarborough, Jean Thomas, etc.—poking into every corner of our country taking down melodies or recording them on phonograph discs, have revealed to the world a folk music which for variety of mood and sentiment, subtlety of nuance, and intensity of feeling (as well as occasional originality of musical design) can stand comparison with the best folk music anywhere.

Much of it probably had outside origin. Immigrants pouring into this country brought with them from the Old World memories of their songs. They borrowed from them copiously in describing musically their experiences in the new land. Yet, by a subtle chemistry, these melodies became American, transformed often in intangible qualities by American experience. Just as the individuals arriving here became American through absorption of American experiences and ideals, so the songs they sang acquired new traits and elements. Not only the mood and emotional quality of the songs changed, but even the melodic and rhythmic elements made new songs of the old, brought to them an altogether new personality.

From our earliest beginnings Americans have sung of their experiences, troubles,

and aspirations in a folk music that grew as democracy evolved. In large measure it helped express that evolution; it followed the frontier and developing industry; it mirrored the growth of a nation.

II

Early in our history both shipbuilding and lumbering became highly important industries. Timber was plentiful. As early as the beginning of the 18th century, New England trees were being transformed into buildings and ships; they became a commodity for export to England. In the early 19th century, the lumbering industry moved westward to Pennsylvania and Michigan. By the middle of the century professional lumbering reached its heyday, and with it came the flowering of the shantyboy songs.

The man with the axe derived his name of shantyboy from the French *chanter*—to sing. The man who could write songs and sing them was held in the highest esteem. There is the saga of George Burns. One evening, during the height of a blizzard, Burns staggered into a log camp, frozen and starved. When warmth returned to his body, he asked for food and offered to pay for it with songs. They made such an impression on the men they insisted he stay with them all winter and entertain them during the evenings. Burns was not a good shantyboy, but his shortcomings with the axe were forgiven and forgotten for the sake of his music-making. Burns was typical of the wandering minstrel—

COMMON GROUND

here one day, gone the next—who traveled from one log camp to another practising his art. Proud of his gifts and expansive before an audience, the singing shantyboy was an individualist of the stature of a true artist, insisting upon singing only those songs he liked, and singing them in his own manner.

They were a polyglot lot—the shantyboys of the West. Scottish, Irish, Germans, and French Canadians were in the majority. Their life was hard, the dangers plentiful. After a day of work, their supper consumed, they would sit in front of a roaring stove and sing of the hardships of their calling.

The shanties are not work songs—meant to lighten the tasks of labor—but are songs about their work, their troubles, hopes, nostalgia. Irish and Scottish folk songs were predominant, but shanties revealed other origins as well. Old English ballads (the kind that were preserved in the Appalachian Mountains) became shanties. So did sailor chanteys, vaudeville tunes, railroad songs, even Negro spirituals. Many other songs, however, are original, though they betray foreign

Often rough and masculine, these songs projected emotions rather self-consciously. A *Shantyman's Life* is a good example of the melodic quality of the best of them, mirroring as it does, in music as well as in words, the bleakness of this life. The songs have the restrained sadness of men too stout of heart to give it more than passing notice. Without becoming maudlin, songs like *Jimmie Whalen* have a poignance achieved through understatement. Occasionally rough humor may enter into them, but whether in humor or in sorrow, there is a lusty pace to the shantyboy song, reflective of a vigorous life.

III

Then there were songs sung by the men who took to ships. From the beginning, America was a seafaring nation; it built ships which rivaled the best efforts of Europe. It developed commerce, had some of the best-manned boats on the high seas.

The work of the sailors was arduous, under discipline that bordered on cruelty. To lighten his tasks—to escape from the

THE LITTLE BROWN BULLS



fingerprints at times, and they have qualities both in technique and mood found nowhere else in our popular music. The rhythms—because these songs were more often declaimed than sung—are free and elastic; many of the airs are purposely notated unbarred to achieve the quality of melodic declamation. Songs like *The Jam on Gerry's Rocks* and *The Little Brown Bulls* become through this free use of rhythm remarkably dramatic.

reality of hard work and ruthless punishment—the sailor sang. In the early days of seagoing, the crews frequently included instrumentalists—a fiddler or an accordion player—who would provide accompaniment to all the singing. As work aboard ship grew more complex, with no hand spared, instrumental accompaniments were abandoned. The sailor songs became exclusively a cappella, usually with solo lines sung by the leader, and

AMERICA'S FOLK MUSIC

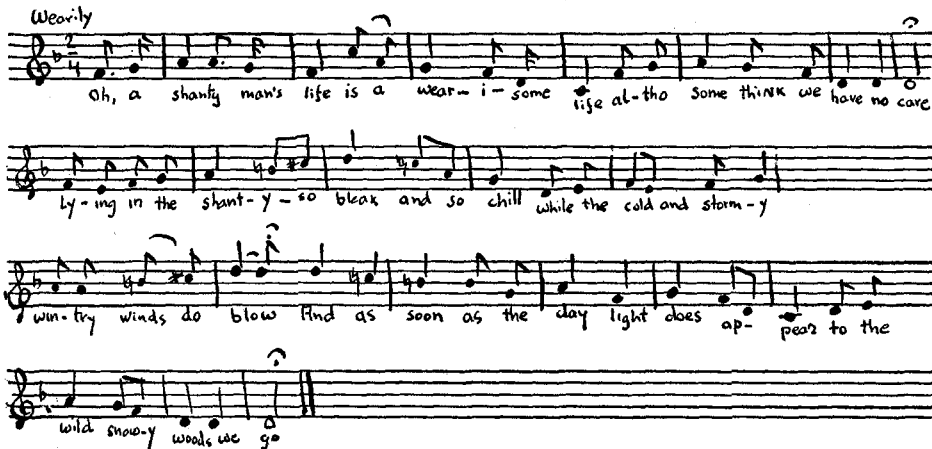
the rest of the crew joining in the refrain. The choruses, of course, were standardized to permit unison singing. But the solo singing of the chanteyman permitted as much variation and elaboration as his imagination encouraged.

The chantey was (as the shantyboy song was not) primarily a work song, an

time) with measured, even rhythms, employed for longer and heavier jobs such as hoisting sail or casting anchor; "Capstan songs," like *Rio Grande*, were adapted for work of a long and steady process, had long choruses and an understandable monotony of metre.

Like the lumberjack, the sailor took

A SHANTYMAN'S LIFE



indispensable element of labor done exclusively by manpower. Without the precision of the rhythmic movement the songs provided, it would have been impossible to achieve the exact timing in heaving and pulling required of every man. It was therefore expected that the men should sing continually at their work, and their singing was encouraged by their superiors. Because the songs inevitably expropriated the rhythmic quality of the work at hand, they became remarkable for rhythmic inventiveness, cogency of drive, crispness of accent. "Short drags" like *Haul Away, Joe* or *Haul on the Bowline* had crisp, staccato rhythm for tasks requiring short, heavy pulls; "Halliard chantey," the most famous of which is *Blow, Boys, Blow*, were regular in form (usually written in common

his melody wherever he found it—from foreign balladry, vaudeville ditties, cowboy songs, patriotic melodies. Many of the chantey, however, were original—the creation of the chanteyman who led his crew. Because he was selected for his voice, Irishmen and Negroes—with the most appealing voices—were invariably selected for the assignment. For this reason, of all the varied strains which make up the cloth of sailor chantey, those of Irish balladry and the Negro spiritual are perhaps the most prominent.

IV

During the 17th and 18th centuries, British settlers penetrated into the Appalachian and Cumberland mountains of Kentucky, Tennessee, north Georgia, the Carolinas, Missouri, and Virginia, there

COMMON GROUND

to build their homes. Difficulty of access, either by road or rail, brought to these mountain settlers a cloistered existence, quite apart from that of the rest of the country. Virtually until the dawn of the 20th century, these mountain folk lived a secluded and primitive life. Horseback was their only method of travel over difficult trails. Their livelihood came from working at the soil. Their homes were primitive, their existence simple to the point of being threadbare. Money was unknown—the barter system serving adequately their economic purposes. Most of the mountain people had no schooling whatsoever; they spoke in an archaic language passed on to them from preceding generations.

But they preserved a wonderful musical folklore and kept alive an almost inexhaustible library of folk songs. Unknown to the rest of the country, this music was kept fresh and vibrant within the impenetrable walls of the surrounding mountains. Then in 1916, several musicologists—among them Cecil Sharp of England and the Brooklyn-born Howard Brockway—explored the mountain communities and helped unearth this repertoire of American folk music, all of it of British origin.

“We stepped out of New York into the life of the frontier settler of David Boone’s time,” wrote Brockway, describing his expedition. “Here are people who know naught of the advance which had been made in the world outside of their mountains. It surpasses belief. . . . In the 17th century their ancestors brought the songs from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and they have been handed down orally from generation to generation. Songs that died out in the old country a century ago are still sung every day in the Appalachian region. The statement has been made that amongst these people one can find nearly all the folk

songs ever sung in the British Isles, and perhaps the claim is not far wrong.”

As Sharp noted in his monumental edition of these mountain tunes, they are no museum pieces preserved from a past age, but music of living, vital quality. Everybody sang, from young to old. There were few homes which did not boast of some musical instrument—preferably a fiddle, guitar, or a banjo. And all seemed to have a natural flair for ballad-making.

The most famous of these melodies, classics like *Pretty Polly*, *Barbara Alien*, and *Two Sisters* (of which there exist many variants) have preserved old English traditions of ballad-writing. Others, like *Ground Hog*, *Kentucky Moonshiner*, and *Sourwood Mountain*—while obviously derived from English balladry—are more intrinsically American; they have acquired an atmosphere and nuances of expression the English never possessed. The free intonation (the nasal twang and slides) of a gem like *Kentucky Moonshiner*—characteristic of all mountain songs—together with the salty humor and the ever-present mood of mountain loneliness give it an essentially American personality:

*I've been a moonshiner for seven-
teen long years,
I've spent all my money on whiskey
and beers.
I'll go to some holler and up my
still,
I'll sell you one gallon for a two-
dollar bill.*

The mountain folk were simple people, who sang of their everyday experiences (except for their white spirituals, in which they expressed their deep religious feelings). The melodies were generally unaccompanied, and almost always solo; they are called “lonesome tunes” and do not encourage harmonic treatment. They have an intonation all their own, with peculiar color and charm. They have freely

AMERICA'S FOLK MUSIC

fluctuating rhythms, intriguing patterns, and a high quality of spontaneity, and they are as natural a part of the life of the people as breathing and eating.

V

Migration westward—and its accompanying songs—began almost as soon as the war for independence was over. Inflation and depreciation, the crushing taxation on farms, the panic that succeeded a brief period of postwar prosperity, all sent an ever-swelling army of pioneers into new, rich lands. In 1788 almost a thousand boats carried 18,000 settlers down the Ohio. By 1790 more than 170,000 settlers had passed over the mountainous regions of the South to the westward lands of Kentucky and Tennessee, and the expansion West continued without interruption throughout the 19th century.

This migration brought a birth of new folk song. Bullwhackers, who drove the wagons, sang as they traveled. Stout-hearted pioneers, who lived dangerously and worked hard, sang of their new lives in open country. The entertainments of the city—the theater, social gatherings, even card games—were virtually nonexistent in spaces where one's nearest neighbor lived frequently many miles away. To while away hours of rest and leisure, men and women sang, sometimes making up songs of their own—songs of virility, strength, energy, songs of the open spaces with a power of rhythm and an almost wildness of melody unique to them.

These men were free men. They could build their lives in their own way; they developed their own governments freed of any vestiges of imperial rule. A spirit of equality was born on the frontier—where each man's courage, energy, lack of snobbery made him the equal of his neighbor.

The same spirit entered the songs these men sang. They looked contemptuously upon the popular songs of the eastern seaboard as "Federalist" tunes—the aristocratic tunes of a snobbish people. In the East, they sang about the fashions of the day, or about local politics. Their most popular tunes were bathed in sentimentality: *The Vulture of the Alps*, a great favorite long before the Civil War, described the agony of a parent in seeing her child snatched by a vulture; songs like *The Railroad Wreck* and *The Ship on Fire* sent audiences to tears with their realistic descriptions of major catastrophes. Musically, these songs were formal and stereotyped. The melodies followed the long-accepted patterns of balladry: eight bar songs carefully subdivided into two equal sections, the rhythm even and humdrum.

What the frontiersman wanted in his songs was music for a plain, common, democratic people. He had no use for sentimentalism, for snobbish descriptions of fashions and city vice; he swept away the eastern formal, academic style. To the popular song he brought a gust of spirit and independence of form like a breath of fresh air. His *Shoot the Buffalo* had an energy and lustiness remote from the pallid sentiments of eastern parlors. A melody like *The Star of Columbia* stemmed from a scale with a definite pentatonic character—a far cry from the unvarying diatonic structure of the seaboard songs. In mood and spirit it had a strength and passion—largely through the use of varied rhythmic patterns—which made the songs of the East sound anemic by contrast.

The fiddle was the favorite instrument of the frontiersman. The pioneers would play old tunes and evolve new ones for all their social gatherings. For square dances, for play parties (play parties were evolved as a modified substitute for dancing by

COMMON GROUND

the more religious pioneers; the young people would sing *Here Comes Three Dukes*, *Weevily Wheat*, or *Skip to My Lou* to involved gestures and steps), for children's play, and for balladry and wagon tunes performed at small social gatherings, the fiddle tune formed the

of the animal spirits of strong-hearted men inspired by visions of wealth; the melodies they borrowed—and created—reflected their high spirits in tunes filled with bluster and swagger, admirably illustrated by *Sacramento*.

There was also the cowboy who created



spine and backbone of pioneer music. The fiddlers played from memory, and they learned new tunes by ear. Originally borrowed from varied sources (sometimes as far removed as an Irish reel, at others from the minstrel show), these tunes, at the hands of different fiddlers, underwent a radical metamorphosis in structure. A melody might acquire new figurations as the fiddler permitted his imagination to wander. The melody itself would be dramatic with abrupt intervals, often that of open fifths. The rhythm became vigorous and dynamic, sharp and incisive. Men of strength and will inevitably expressed themselves in tunes equally strong and independent. Before long, these were considered original by the pioneers; and, to a large degree, original they had become.

The opening of the West brought a wealth of other songs, too. The '49ers, who trekked across the prairies in search of gold, created their own. Many were parodies of the popular tunes of the day (the most famous, Stephen Foster's *O Susannah!* set to new words). The lyrics were sometimes bawdy and usually full

songs to rally his herd or lull them to sleep "up the trail" from Texas to the shipping point at Fort Dodge, Texas. A simple person, close to the fundamentals of living and working, his songs were simple in design to a point of being almost ingenuous, with little variety of metre or melody. He was lonely for the most part, and his songs abound with nostalgic sentiments for home, a girl, peace, and rest. His best friend was his horse, his one dread a lonely grave. Frequently he sang sad accents about dying alone and being buried on the wide prairie, though occasionally lusty spirits found expression in songs of irrepressible robustness—and he sang of breaking loose in Dodge City. But most often his is a plaintive tune. Songs like *Good-bye Ol' Paint*, *The Lone Prairie*, *Poor Lonesome Cowboy*, *The Dying Cowboy* are characteristic in their touch of poignancy.

The men who built the railroads drove their spikes on sun-baked prairies to the tunes of swinging work songs. A leader (frequently chosen because he could sing and improvise) would chant the saga of John Henry or the story of a famous wreck, and the workers would join in the

AMERICA'S FOLK MUSIC

chorus, accenting the beat with vigorous clangs of their hammers on the spikes. Their music has fine rhythmic pace and drive.

In the mines, minstrelsy also flourished: miners would participate in communal gatherings on the green in the mine patch at night, in a nearby barroom, or even during the lunch hour within the mine itself. Mine songs—*Down in a Coal Mine*, *Oh My Liver and My Lungs*, *The Coal Miner's Child*—are full of social implications—full of sweat and toil, speaking the fear and despair which dominated the miner's uncertain life.

VI

Finally, there is the music of the Negro—probably the richest and proudest and artistically the most significant of our folk music. So much has already been written about the songs of the Negro—and so well is it known—that any detailed comment here is superfluous. It need only be pointed out that, like all our other folk music, the songs of the Negro also had foreign origin: from Africa he brought some of the rhythmic and melodic devices of African music (shifting accents, syncopated beats, a Dorian-like mode in the melody). But the Negro spiritual and “shout” are far removed from African music. The same subtle chemistry that transformed all our immigrant folk music into something unmistakably American, also played its part in the evolution of Negro song. The melody was transformed until it became the lamentation of an oppressed people. It acquired intensity of feeling, a brooding

sorrow, a religious fervor which African music had never known—and thereby it graduated from a primitive expression into a great musical art.

The march of American civilization has left the making of much of this folk music in our distant past. The compulsions which created it no longer exist. Engines, tractors, trucks, and motors displaced manpower in the forests; steam made the use of sails obsolete; machinery did the tasks once assigned to rough hands and strong backs in the opening of the country. The insularity of the Appalachian mountains was shattered by the 20th century invasion of good concrete roads, the Ford, public education, and the radio. The primitivism of its inhabitants disappeared, and with it much of the creation of its original balladry. The West is now open; the age of pioneering is over; the round-up and the march down the long trail are things of the past. The western pioneer and the cowboy have become vanishing Americans.

But the music that was created by American experiences of yesterday remains alive—a deathless and eloquent commentary on our past. It is only one phase of our folk music: old and passing traditions are ever superseded by new ones, and they too are the stimulus for the folk art of a new age.

David Ewen is the author of many books on music, his latest being Dictators of the Baton.

• Miscellany •

THE YOUTHBUILDERS CLUB of Junior High School No. 43 in the Harlem area of New York City has been intelligently active trying to explode the theory of racial differences in blood.

"Several months ago," they say, "our club, composed of students 12 to 14 years old, was searching for material means to aid the war effort for the cause of freedom and equality. After discussion and interviews with war officials, we decided that promoting unity between the Negro and white people of the neighborhood was the most valuable thing we could do, because of friction over the fiction that Negro and white blood was different. Even some of our club members believed it.

"So we had a meeting between club members and science teachers and Dr. John T. Myers, Chief of Staff of a large laboratory and his assistant, Mr. David Eigenfeld. The president of our club, a Negro girl, Bernice Bethea, and Fred Stern, a white member, were the guinea pigs for this experiment. A comparison of the blood of both persons under the microscope showed that it was the same.

"Next, we decided on ways of publicizing the important facts we had learned. Extra slides were made for the science teachers in our school, and we also wrote up the experiment in the school paper. But we thought printed words weren't dramatic enough. A poster would be the glow of genius, the members thought, and so a poster it was. Since we had no artists among us, our poster committee commissioned Walter L. Wallace, the Fifth, a former '43-er, now a student at the High School of Music and Art, to make it. Our poster committee also found 165 key places in the neighborhood which promised to put it up."

To make sure no one in the neighborhood missed the poster or word about the project, the youngsters made a practice of conversing loudly about it on trolleys and buses, in the corner grocery stores. Eventually they called a large meeting at the Hotel Edison to spread the word beyond their neighborhood—and some 500 people attended. In announcing the meeting, said Tommy Edwards, a member of the club, "As we all know, the aim of Hitler and Tojo is to pit one race against another. We must not play into the hands of these murderous gangsters and despicable enemies, whose motto is 'Divide and Rule.' So, as there is no racial difference in blood, why segregate it? Then we could truly typify our American motto—'United We Stand.'"

When the Red Cross drive came along in school, they debated at length whether they should contribute their nickels and dimes to the organization whose discriminatory practice they had been battling. Deciding finally that some Americans might die on the battlefield if the Red Cross were not supported, they voted to contribute, but wrapped each donation in a paper of specific protest at segregation of blood.

THE EAST AND WEST ASSOCIATION (40 East 40th Street, New York City), a non-profit, non-political organization having as its sole purpose the introduction to each other of the peoples of the East and the West, has launched a "Letters to China" project. Pearl S. Buck, president of the Association, writes: "We hope . . . that the letters come from persons with a variety of interests. We are suggesting that the letters tell some-

MISCELLANY

thing about the daily life, the home, work, and recreation, the reasons why we are fighting this war, the world we hope will come out of it for us all. These letters will be sent to China in batches. As far as is humanly possible they will be distributed there to persons who have interests similar to those of the letter-writers here. The Chinese answers will be sent back to us here and given out to the Americans who wrote the letters.

"Transmission and translation are being arranged for, so that each person will get the letter in the language he can read or at least understand. . . .

"What will come out of this exchange? We hope, first, a personal relation between individual Americans and individual Chinese; second, a picture of everyday American life and Chinese life made by the ones who really live it; third, direct education of those who read the letters. Naturally the letters will be read and talked about by many more than the ones who actually write and receive them. In a Chinese village, for example, I am sure that such a letter would create a center of talk for days and of undying interest and goodwill.

"The letters must be sent through the East and West Association in order to provide for translation and transmission to those who are ready to receive and distribute them properly in China. . . .

"We are asking for a great number of letters from Americans, to be delivered to as many Chinese. Please write your letter—or type it if you possibly can—on a single sheet of very thin paper (for air mail) and send it, with whatever contribution you are able to make to 'Letters to China' Project, The East and West Association, 40 East 49th Street, New York City."

Another recent project of the Association was a "Greetings, China" party at the Nathan Straus Library for Young

People in New York City in April. Based on the idea that young people of East and West can have a great deal of fun learning to know each other, the party brought together 200 boys and girls of 50 high schools in the New York area to meet Chinese students enrolled at various city colleges. A Chinese shadow show, a game of Chinese shuttlecocks, stories, and folk and operatic music, demonstrations of Chinese painting and writing made up the program, designed primarily to show American and Chinese students how much they can enjoy together. Schools, clubs, libraries, and community organizations who wish to plan similar get-togethers may write the East and West Association (address above) for sample programs and lists of available exhibit materials.

PUBLIC HEARINGS on various proposals to repeal Chinese exclusion and other racial discriminations in our immigration and naturalization laws were held in Washington before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization May 19 and 20 and will be continued on later dates. Military necessity alone dictates the repeal of a series of laws which are an insult to one of our allies and a great people. The time is ripe also for clearing our immigration and naturalization laws of those arbitrary racial discriminations which are inconsistent with any kind of decent and workable postwar world.

How far Congress can be persuaded to go will depend largely on the effectiveness of the hearings and the degree of public support which is rallied. Repeal of our Chinese exclusion laws is an important gesture, but a gesture only. It will not admit a single Chinese. The more crucial question is whether we are willing to put the Chinese and other Oriental peoples on the same quota basis as other

COMMON GROUND

nationalities—in general each would have a minimum quota of only 100—and to make any alien whom we have admitted to the United States for permanent residence eligible to naturalization, regardless of race.

A national Citizens' Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion is being organized under the chairmanship of Richard J. Walsh, 40 East 49th Street, New York City, and those who wish to work actively on this matter should get in touch with him.

AMONG THE SIX WHITES cited by the nation-wide poll conducted by the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature of The New York Public Library to determine the twelve Negroes (individuals, organization, or institutions), who have most distinguished themselves during the year, and the six white persons (individuals, organization, or institutions), over the same period, who have done the most for the improvement of race relations "in terms of real democracy," was Lillian Smith, who is familiar to COMMON GROUND readers for two hard-hitting articles in our pages: "Burning Down Georgia's Back Porch," Winter '42, and "Democracy Was Not a Candidate," Winter '43.

"As editor of *South Today*," the citation read, Miss Smith "has maintained a consistent liberalism in a land where it takes courage to be liberal." This quarterly is by all odds the most courageous voice being raised in the South on interracial matters of concern to CG readers. The Winter issue alone is worth the price of a subscription (*South Today*, Clayton, Georgia—\$1.00 a year) for its wealth of specific recommendations of concrete day-to-day procedures which the ordinary individual can employ in bettering relations between black and white.

THE 1943 WINNERS of the John Anisfield Awards in Racial Relations are Zora Neale Hurston for her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, and Donald Pierson for his study, *Negroes in Brazil*. In recommending these books editorially, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, under whose sponsorship the \$1,000 awards are presented annually, says: "Nothing has more sharply emphasized the democratic problem which we inherited from slavery than the pressures of our present crisis and the obvious need of putting our own house in order before we talk too much of Americanism as a cultural and political success."

For a history of the Anisfield Awards see CG, Summer 1942, "The John Anisfield Foundation," by Ann Eliza Keller.

THREE CG AUTHORS have recently been awarded Rosenwald fellowships in creative writing: Roi Ottley, who will do a book on the participation of the colored peoples of the world in the war; Woody Guthrie, who will "write books, ballads, songs, and novels that will help people to know each other's work better"; and Thomas Sancton, who will write a non-fiction book on race relations.

HERE IS A QUESTION for our readers, posed by one of our colored subscribers: "I live in a new home surrounded by Italian and a few Irish neighbors. I have a daughter twenty months old. She is golden yellow in color. Her hair is light brown and her mother curls it. Her eyes, believe it or not, are almost blue. The children in the neighborhood, droves of them, all white, are crazy about her. They come up on our porch, into our house, to play with her. They have the gayest sort of times together. My little girl, of course, doesn't know she is colored—and *different*. But I know that in another twenty months or so she will be trudging

MISCELLANY

to kindergarten a couple of blocks away and she'll meet little white boys and girls who have not been her neighbors. They are not going to stop at telling her that she's colored. They are going to tell and call her more and worse. Through them she is going to receive the first puzzling glimpse of the different sort of world that is to be hers. Then she is going to come home to me, crying, and ask me to tell her what it means. When that day comes, *what shall I tell her and how?*"

CLEVELAND HAS ESTABLISHED an Inter-cultural Library, with its own building, divided into alcoves, one for each foreign-language group in the city. These alcoves contain books, manuscripts, paintings, sculpture, costumes, and other artistic objects given or lent by the heirs to those cultures resident in Cleveland. It is also hoped to catalog many other objects which may not yet be available for the library, for a reserve that can be drawn on for occasional cultural celebrations, etc. With an auditorium for meetings, lectures, folk dances, and plays, the Library hopes to grow into an important regional cultural center.

"AMERICA MAY BE DEFINED as a place where an inmate of a concentration camp makes a picture of her guards, sends it to an exhibition a thousand miles away and wins a prize with it," writes Alfred Frankenstein in the San Francisco Chronicle. "This is what happened in connection with the San Francisco Art Association's seventh annual exhibition of drawings and prints, now at the San Francisco Museum of Art. The prize winner is Miné Okubo, who is now at the Japanese Relocation Center at Topaz, Utah, and who was awarded the artist fund prize for a draw-

ing of soldiers on watch done in her customarily monumental sculpturesque style. There is no trace of rancor or resentment in this picture. . . ."

"SPEAKING OF SLAVS" is broadcast each Sunday afternoon over Station WSNY in Schenectady. Aimed at creating unity among the various Slav groups of the region—Polish, Ukrainian, Czech, and Slovak Americans—and at dispelling the "regrettable shame that second-generation youth too often have for the land from which their parents came," it has served also as an excellent means of acquainting other Americans with the contribution and character of the Slavic group.

ONE OF THE MOST UNUSUAL WAR PLANTS in the country recently celebrated its first birthday—the Pacific Parachute Company in San Diego, the first Negro-owned and operated concern with government contracts. Run by Howard "Skippy" Smith, the famous parachute jumper, and Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, it maintains no color bar on the assembly line that turns out silk and nylon chutes in 35 or 40 operations. Over six racial and national groups work together without friction—Swiss, Italian, Spanish, Mexican, Jewish, old-stock white and Negro. A Negro is a forelady, for instance, while one of the inspectors is a Missouri-born white.

THE LATEST ISSUE of Building America, 2 West 45th Street, New York City, is dedicated to our Spanish Americans—"Problem of Today and Opportunity of Tomorrow." With graphic pictures and running text, it makes fine supplementary material for study groups which made use of Carey McWilliams' article in the Spring of '43 CG—"The Forgotten Mexican."

• Schools and Teachers •

A NEW EXPERIMENT IN EDUCATION

Too late in February for inclusion in our Spring issue came a letter from Lawrence Martin, chief editorial writer of the Chicago Times (familiar to CG readers for his "Is Americanism American?" in the Winter 1942 number), telling of the opening of the Abraham Lincoln School to help Chicagoans understand the war and the peace for which we are fighting. Wrote Mr. Martin:

"Deeply disheartening to Middle West liberals as well as to the nation at large was the election of the Chicago Tribune-led isolationists, C. Wayland Brooks and Stephen A. Day, to Congress. But it is an ill wind. . . . Something good has come of it.

"Thoroughly alarmed by this one of many manifestations of the people's mental confusion, a group of thoughtful fighting citizens of the Middle West has organized to create a new experiment in education, under the banner of 'A People's War; A People's Peace.' The Abraham Lincoln School begins classes on March 1 in Chicago, at 30 West Washington Boulevard. It is a non-profit, non-sectarian institution, supported solely by contributions. Its director is Alban D. Winspear, on leave from the University of Wisconsin where he is associate professor of philosophy. Dr. Winspear, educated in England and Canada, served with the Royal Air Force in 1918, and is author of several books on Greek and Roman history and philosophy.

"On the executive board are business and professional men, artists, and labor leaders. Members include Pearl Hart, noted Chicago attorney; Dr. Joseph Fletcher, Dean of the School of Applied

Religion, University of Cincinnati; Dr. Metz T. P. Lochard, editor of The Chicago Defender; Fullerton Fulton, regional director of the cio; Earl B. Dickerson, alderman; and Jessie Lloyd O'Connor, leader of women's and consumer groups.

"Among the instructors and guest lecturers are Dr. Anton J. Carlson of the University of Chicago; Gordon Skilling of the University of Wisconsin, formerly propaganda analyst for the BBC; Merle Curti, professor of history, University of Wisconsin; Harvey O'Connor, Chicago author, and many others.

"To make the school accessible to the greatest number, the tuition is only five dollars a course, with scholarships available at lower cost. Many union locals are enrolling groups, and some are paying for the tuition of their members. Unique is the extension program: if students cannot come to the school, the school will go to them, providing instructors for groups of ten or more.

"The curriculum includes more than fifty courses, taking in history, philosophy, languages and letters. Some of the titles are eloquent: 'Ideas Are Weapons,' 'A Century of the Common Man,' 'War-time Trade Union Problems,' 'Marriage and the Family in Wartime,' 'India and the Colonial World in the Global War,' 'Mathematics Refresher.' The approach in each subject emphasizes present-day problems, and the rule for teachers is to be constructive so that the people may be prepared to push their leaders in the direction of a peace that will indeed usher in the Century of the Common Man.

"From those of your readers who do not live in the Chicago area and cannot en-

SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

roll, we ask for contributions of money and of books for the library. We do not ask in humility, since the education of the Middle West will benefit the nation as a whole. And we would like to see an Abraham Lincoln School in every great center of the United States, clearing away prejudice and confusion, helping to build a citizenry that knows where it wants to go and what is attainable for itself and its children. Pearl Buck has accused liberals of do-nothing despair. Here is one front on which they can fight."

Today the school is well under way. Over 1,000 enrolled in the courses offered in the initial 12 week semester. Increasing

demand for more courses led to the institution of a series of 6 week courses beginning the end of April at a tuition fee of \$3 each. Among the new courses offered are "The War Labor Board and Your Wages," "Psychology—How to Keep Sane in a Changing World," "How to Get More Nourishing Food From Your Ration Card," "Dancing as a Living Art," and "America's Enemies—How to Identify Them," a course which will spotlight demagogues who incite race hatred in America, the structure of fascism generally, its origin, and the cause of its growth.

NOTES

THE SERVICE BUREAU for Intercultural Education (221 West 57th Street, New York City) is sponsoring a series of teachers' manuals and resource units under the general title "Problems of Race and Culture in American Education." First of the books published is *Intercultural Education in American Schools: Proposed Objectives and Methods* by William E. Vickery and Stewart G. Cole (Harpers. \$2). This is an excellent tool for teachers who are already at work in the field of bettering group relations in America, or who are thinking they would like to be if only they knew how and where to begin. Here is the necessary background material—discussions of the controversial theories of race and culture and education; and here also is a wealth of concrete suggestions on planning a program of intercultural education, and the classroom materials, methods, and techniques involved.

DR. WILLIAM H. JOHNSON, superintendent of schools in Chicago, has announced the inclusion of Negro achievement as part of the regular city-wide program of social studies in the public schools. Community life is studied in the primary grades—stories which show the Negro not only as private and public servants, but as educators, musicians, and scientists. Fourth grade work includes Negro inventors in clothing and electricity; fifth grade, Chicago's first Negro pioneer settler, and a study of plantation life; sixth, Negroes in discovery and exploration, and Africa; seventh, Negroes in the Revolutionary and Civil War periods; eighth, Negroes in military life and contemporary Negro leaders in Chicago. Chicago is believed to be the first city in the country to integrate Negro history with the regular social studies program.

• The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

AMERICA DISCOVERS THE WORLD

ONE WORLD. Wendell L. Willkie. New York: Simon and Schuster. 206 pp. \$2

There have been veils of prejudice, misinformation, sheer ignorance that hid from us the real condition of men and things on this planet far from our privileged shores. Mr. Willkie has drawn these veils aside. This day-to-day account of his swift flight through the war-torn countries clears our vision as nothing else could. This is a contagious report of a man meeting men—Egyptians, Arabs, Turks, Russians, Chinese—and not leaders only, or military men, but engineers, craftsmen, farm managers, civilians in many walks of life. Plying his questions searchingly, persistently—keenly observant all the while—he gained both their declared point of view and a knowledge of undercurrents not overtly revealed. As a result, he is convinced that the people of the twelve countries he visited must run their own show. Only in this way will they find heart to assume the burdens that modern living must impose. Colonial systems and mandates will not inspire the energy and determination that Russia, Turkey, and China have already shown. The personal interviews with world figures in today's dramatic crisis and the utter informality of these conversations hold deep significance as well as charm. Mr. Willkie's convictions interlock strikingly with those of others who write also of America's discovery that this is one world.

Alexander Laing, in *Way for America* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$3), draws

partly from those courageous modern books that grapple with the world scene and our position in it, but he draws also from the land, from that "wisdom of the people" which in times of crisis he feels is more dependable than expert judgments devoid of moral responsibility. Democracy he describes as "the strength of the people." His book is a straight-thinking, hard-hitting appeal to the world's people to bring their moral integrity to bear on problems over which experts in government and foreign relations have miserably floundered.

Henry Morton Robinson's *Fantastic Interim* (Harcourt, Brace. \$3.50), however, shows how Americans during the two decades after 1920 were more forgetful of their responsibilities as citizens, their dignity as individuals, and the world-drift toward disaster than we like to think. This well-documented book shows us indulging in "rigadoons of frivolity" when there was every reason for the people's conscience to be on the alert. We discredited democracy at home while weapons were being forged abroad to destroy it in the entire world.

In contrast to the foregoing (but not in conflict with it) Ezequiel Padilla's *Free Men of America* (Ziff-Davis, Alliance. \$2.50) records a statesman's quiet thinking on the American experience and his reflections on the part the people of all the republics of this hemisphere have played in winning the freedom they now possess. Their errors he attributes to faults in the socio-economic system, not to the spirit of the people themselves. Similarly, a vicious commercial imperialism that has

THE BOOKSHELF

bred suspicion of their northern neighbor among Latin Americans is charged to an epoch rather than innate disposition. Revealed here as a man of deep and reasoned convictions, a scholar, a leader of international dimensions, Dr. Padilla throws his influence on the side of a true federation of all American countries, and against the subjugation and exploitation of weak peoples or nations—under colonial or any other pretexts—in any part of the world. As an outstanding figure in the Conference of January, 1942, at Rio, his record is well known.

A Time to Act by Archibald MacLeish (Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50) consists of public addresses—to newspaper men, to writers, graduating classes, and other representative groups. The keynote is a warning: this war will be won or lost in the arena of men's minds. Hence a grave

responsibility rests on those who influence mental attitudes through the press, the films, as writers, or as publishers and vendors of books.

James Marshall's *The Freedom to Be Free* (John Day. \$2.50) views the world scene from a psychological angle, showing that unrest everywhere is a sign of minds maturing and in revolt against paternalism in whatever form. In a fine analysis of trends in this and other lands, the author demonstrates that democracy has deep psychological roots in man's development to maturity; that this is achieved when men realize themselves as individuals, respect others as such, and are accepted at their true worth. Failure to be accepted breeds despair and anger in persons—war among nations. In both cases persistent infantilisms are the cause of failure. A truly illuminating book.

WHERE NEW AND OLD CULTURES MEET

In *The Heart Returneth* by Vera Lebedeff (Lippincott. \$2.50), a colony of Russians living in Detroit find their older culture clashing with a mechanical one which is also modern and appeals to the younger element in the group while the elders cling to a dream world they imagine can one day be restored. They try to revive its ways and trappings even while their children are weaned away. The transition and adjustment result in cleavage in families and mental suffering for all. Much that is mourned by these exiled aristocrats is a prideful myth well lost. But from that world of fine manners and cultural advantages there survives a feeling for honor and the values of the spirit, which the younger generation may well carry on. Russian-born, Vera Lebedeff has known every phase of the psychic and social prob-

lems she portrays. She deals kindly with the old people who worship past glories, but her sympathy is with those for whom Russia is not prestige or privilege but something in the blood, intangible yet real. A superb novel in fineness of feeling and analysis of mind-states; memorable for its portraiture of emigrés and a dying culture, and the emergence of a new type, a blend of all that was valid in the old with what is hopeful in the new.

Something similar is done for a family moving from Ulm, on the Danube, to an unnamed American town. Hester Pine's novel, *The Waltz Is Over* (Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50), gives the story of transition and adjustment; but the time is one hundred years ago and the narrative carries through three generations, making the cycle of change and assimilation com-

COMMON GROUND

plete. The most appealing scenes are those of the earlier chapters where Marta, the girl just emerging from adolescence, blends young life and young love in a summer idyll in that historic cathedral town. The story of her later maturing and of a rebuilt life in America is an admirable contribution to the growing number of books in this class—its theme, “America is becoming.”

Jo Pagano's *Golden Wedding* (Random House. \$2.50) also looms large among novels with this motive. With warmth and deep feeling he follows the fortunes of an Italian American family from its start in the Colorado coal fields to its rounding out in the second generation. A plain immigrant family, “the history of their life was the history of an era.” Pagano treats of events in the decades before and after the turn of the century in the light of their effects on real and impressionable human beings in close family relation. A genuine and moving novel.

In *The Human Comedy* (Harcourt,

Brace. \$2.75) William Saroyan happily has hit upon the name Ulysses for the youngster in his first scene, and the name Ithaca for the town of location—more than hinting that all men are one man (even though that man is aged four) and the world is his adventure, a place of wonder and friendship among the veriest strangers. Here's a story told with an art that's instinctive and sure of touch. To be read with delight and remembered with affection.

The Hill, an episodic novel by David Greenhood (Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$2.50), takes us to an old mining town in the back country of California. Here are genuine people who get on together with a quiet acceptance of life, its frustrations and meannesses and kindness. Their self-assumed responsibility for Ma Wong, the very old Chinese woman who remains from the boom days, is a source of local pride and satisfaction. Small town people, plain folks, they are pretty sound. Here is good mountain talk, some philosophy, much humor. A refreshing book.

LIVES AND BACKGROUNDS

Father and Glorious Descendant by Pardee Lowe (Little, Brown. \$2.50) is the story of a Chinese family that became American. Pardee (whose Chinese name is “Glorious Descendant”) proves on every page that the metamorphosis has been a happy one, though not without trials and tests of fortitude. Saturated with humor, packed with colorful incident, this is the most illuminating account that has appeared of a Chinese-born, village-bred Asiatic who adjusted himself equally to his less progressive countrymen and to Americans in business or the professions generally, winning the esteem of both and

founding a family that fulfills his expressed wish: “That they shall accomplish something with their heaven-sent talents and opportunities, preserve the honor of our family name, and win the approval of their fellow men.”

George Washington Carver by Rackham Holt (Doubleday Doran. \$3.50) is an important account of one of the greatest of Americans. Slave-born, already called “plant doctor” at the age of 9, “Carver's George” had a tender heart, a ravenous mind, and the feeling that knowledge was not a part of himself until he had done something with it. These traits and not

THE BOOKSHELF

the drive for fame or riches (he had been led to believe that as a Negro he could hope for neither) shaped the pattern of a life all America honors. Our greatest agricultural genius, one of our most eminent personalities, his is a moving and a revealing story, admirably told by his biographer. This is a book adults should put in the way of all high school youngsters.

In *Bound for Glory* (Dutton. \$3) Woody Guthrie has taken time off from riding the freights and singing his way across the country with his guitar to write as alive and American a book as has come off the presses in a blue moon. The stuff tumbles out of him—nervous, powerful, electric. Fundamentally Woody is a poet—though he would shy from the term—and he handles words as if they had been new-minted for him alone. But COMMON GROUND readers know this already; they were the first to meet Woody Guthrie in print.

Here is Woody's childhood in Okemah, Oklahoma, where his father was a land speculator. Here are the boom-town days of the '20s when they struck oil and the boom-chasers rolled in. Here are the Guthries losing out, the mother going insane, Woody foraging on the dump heaps, and finally hitting the road. And on every page are people, tough strong people who, like Woody, take trouble in their stride, who have a marvelous capacity for courage and quiet gentleness, the great common people for whom there's a new world "in the mail," who, Woody is sure, are "bound for glory."

The Other Side of Main Street by Henry Johnson (Columbia University Press. \$2.75) is Swedish-born Henrik Jönson's narrative of his American upbringing—with family, village, and state all seen in a perspective determined by an odd accident of the book world. For the place of his father's choice was Sauk Centre, Minnesota, birthplace of realist Sinclair Lewis, and model for Gopher Prairie in *Main Street*, accepted by Americans everywhere as the type-portrait of small-town life and character. Here is a different view of it, by an emeritus professor (Columbia Teacher's College) who owns a debt to the helpful friends he made there, especially among the teachers of a well-conducted public school. Culture and stimulating contacts were not wanting in the real Sauk Centre. This autobiography is of value as reflector of the life of a new American so soon adjusted that he feels Minnesota his native state.

Jacques Ducharme in *The Shadows of the Trees* (Harpers. \$2.50) analyzes the place of the French Canadians in the life and economy of New England. Simple, hard-working people, the part they have played so far, he writes, "is not a showy one. They are the laborers, the small taxpayers, the privates in the Army, the millworkers, the small merchants, the women clerks in the department stores, all common people." Written easily and informally, the book is a good addition to the growing list of volumes that probe into the backgrounds of the people who make up America.

HEMISPHERIC BACKGROUNDS

Benjamin Subercaseaux's *Chile* (Macmillan. \$3) merits a thousand words of warmest appreciation. For its poetic and imaginative handling, this book will be a delight to readers who discern that under

his light touch this author conveys the truthful portrait of a land, of a people he has known, by an uncanny sense of value. He has searched the land, the thousand-year-old races, body and spirit, with the

COMMON GROUND

eye of an artist. Max Miller, in *Land Where Time Stands Still* (Dodd, Mead. \$3), has written of his overland journey from San Diego to Cape San Lucas, through Baja California. With his gift for original reportage, and aware of his limitations as an outsider, he has sought to capture the real mood of natives who live as if this were 1750. Harry Franck's *Re-*

discovery of South America (Lippincott. \$5) is perhaps the most intimately revealing of current travel books by Americans from the States. The author retraces routes which he formerly covered two decades earlier—on foot and with pack (where possible)—and is alive to the significance of changes. Highly informative and delightfully informal.

FOR AMERICAN UNITY

Brothers Under the Skin by Carey McWilliams (Little, Brown. \$3) is an excellent presentation of the problem of color in relation to national unity and the struggle we are engaged in. Our American legal and social discrimination against our racial groups is a real threat to the morale of common folk now fighting for or controlled by the United Nations and a constant excuse for defamatory propaganda. An expert in law, experienced in research and social studies, an established writer and a keen analyst, Mr. McWilliams has gathered in this book not only the results of his own wide study and observation but also the verdict of other authorities competent to speak on problems that have baffled the government for three generations. His account of the Indians, Chinese, Mexicans, Japanese, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and Negroes in the United States—and our own treatment of them—is scholarly, convincing, and sane, and makes deeply distressing reading for those who give more than lip service to democracy. Mr. McWilliams has rightly seen the common pattern of injustice and exploitation that runs through our treatment of groups of "high visibility." It is all part of a piece and demands a national approach for a cure. In his closing chapter, "Outline for Action," he indicates remedial legislative measures

in which as citizens we may all share, if only as molders of public opinion. Whether legislation is the final solution to the problem of color in America is probably a debatable point; but Mr. McWilliams has done an incalculable service in marshaling the facts before us and bringing the indictment. The American people—all of us—must make the answer.

Patterns of Negro Segregation by Charles S. Johnson (Harpers. \$3.50) is the second volume in a series of studies on the Negro in America, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation under the direction of Dr. Gunnar Myrdal. Here Dr. Johnson, who is dean of social sciences at Fisk University, brings together a comprehensive and disturbing array of facts on discrimination against the Negro in varying sections of the country: in housing and recreational facilities, opportunities in the public service, commercial and professional opportunities, transportation, education, and the exercise of civil rights and citizenship responsibilities. The second half of the book analyzes the behavioral response of Negroes to discrimination—how far they accept it, how far they seek to avoid it or meet it with outright hostility, what it does to personality. A solid and important study for real understanding of interracial relations.

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THREE LETTERS ABOUT *Common Ground*

From a soldier at Camp Lee, Virginia:

"The other day I read my first copy of COMMON GROUND—at the library in Camp Lee, Virginia. I would like to thank your organization and its generous supporters for putting this Army camp on its mailing list and thus giving many soldiers like myself an introduction to a darn fine magazine.

"If all your issues are of as high a standard as the Spring issue, I feel sure that it will not fail for lack of support. . . . Don't give up the fight. It's more important now than ever before to maintain a practical idealism when so many of us in the army find ourselves slipping into a rut.

"Let us strengthen our democracy to meet the crucial days ahead."

From a Chicago reader:

"[May I] speak of the really great influence which COMMON GROUND is obviously exerting under my own observation? A small reading group to which I belong has used its articles several times as a basis for discussion. And my brother, a San Franciscan of many years' residence, to whom I sent a Christmas subscription, responds in a somewhat irritated way in his letters following certain COMMON GROUND articles dealing especially with the Japanese situation. I am not at all worried . . . for I know he has read what forces him to think in a non-Western, perhaps a universal way, which is far better than complacent agreement."

From the director of the Joint Relief Committee, Havana, Cuba:

"I have been enjoying COMMON GROUND. I think that it is one of the most progressive and enlightening publications I have ever seen. . . .

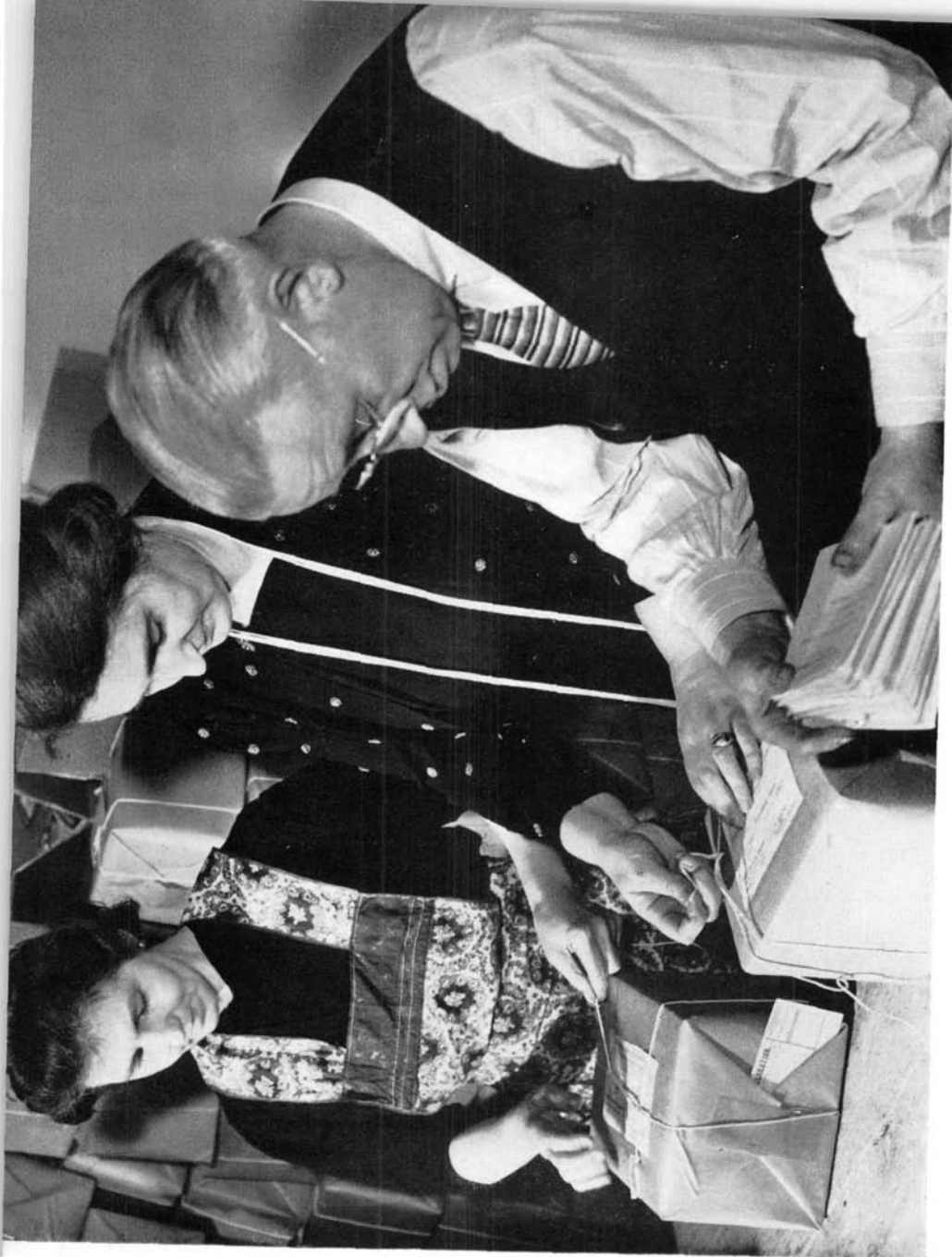
"You may be interested to know that I am circulating this magazine among some of the refugees, and that the largest refugee association here has, at my suggestion, taken the liberty of quoting you extensively in their news sheet which they circulate among their members.

"And, another thing, I am so imbued with the spirit which is expressed in COMMON GROUND that I would like to get closer to the people who are responsible for it. I suppose that means membership in the Common Council for American Unity and I would appreciate it if you would let me know the conditions and whether I would qualify for it."



ALEXANDER ALLAND

Air raid wardens—
Americans of Greek, German,
Jewish, Czechoslovak, Italian,
and Hungarian origin



ALEXANDER ALLAND

*Packages for war relief—
Belgian Americans*



ALEXANDER ALLAND

*Volunteer fire fighters—
Negro Americans*



ALEXANDER ALLAND

Sewing for the Red Cross—
Ukrainian Americans



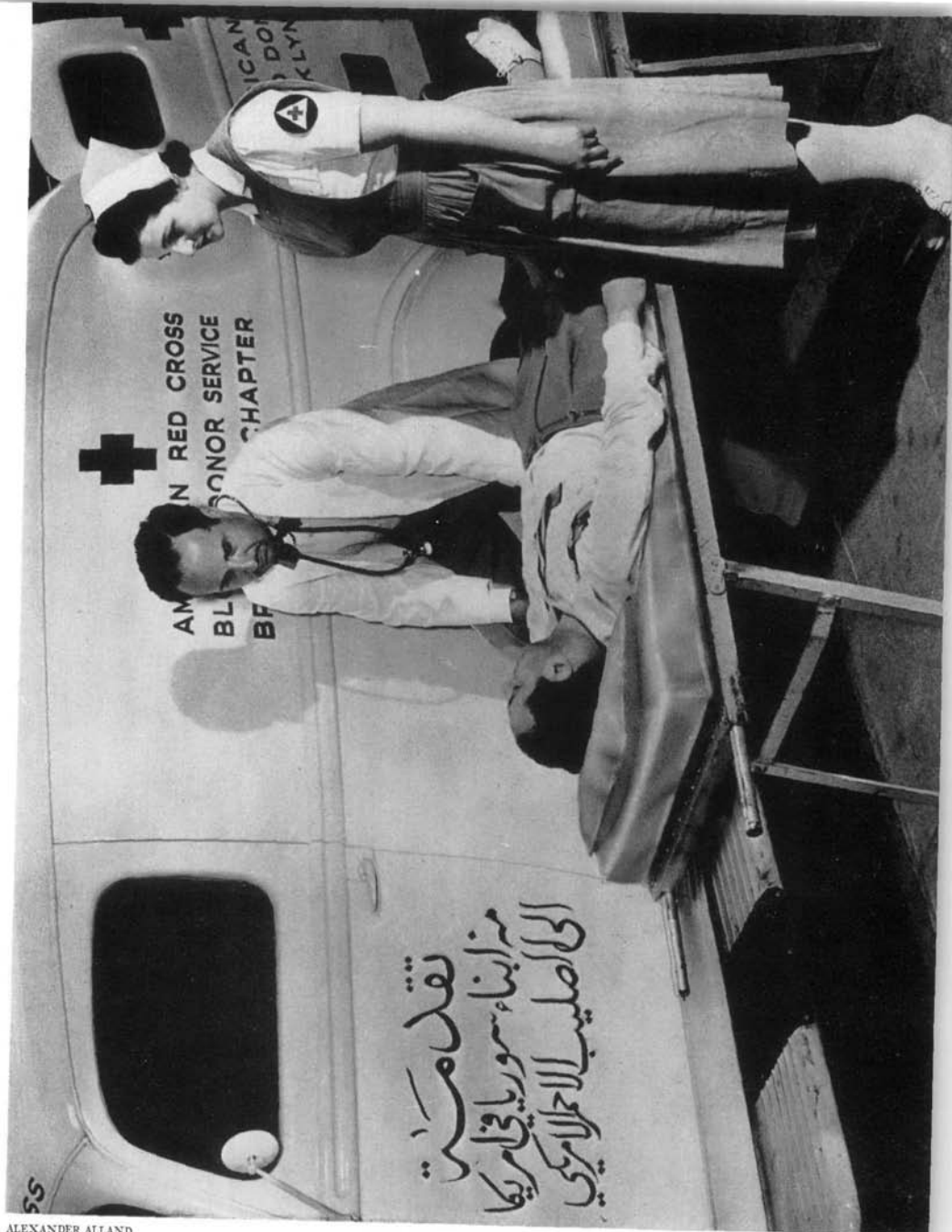
ALEXANDER ALLAND

*Sewing for the Red Cross—
Albanian Americans*



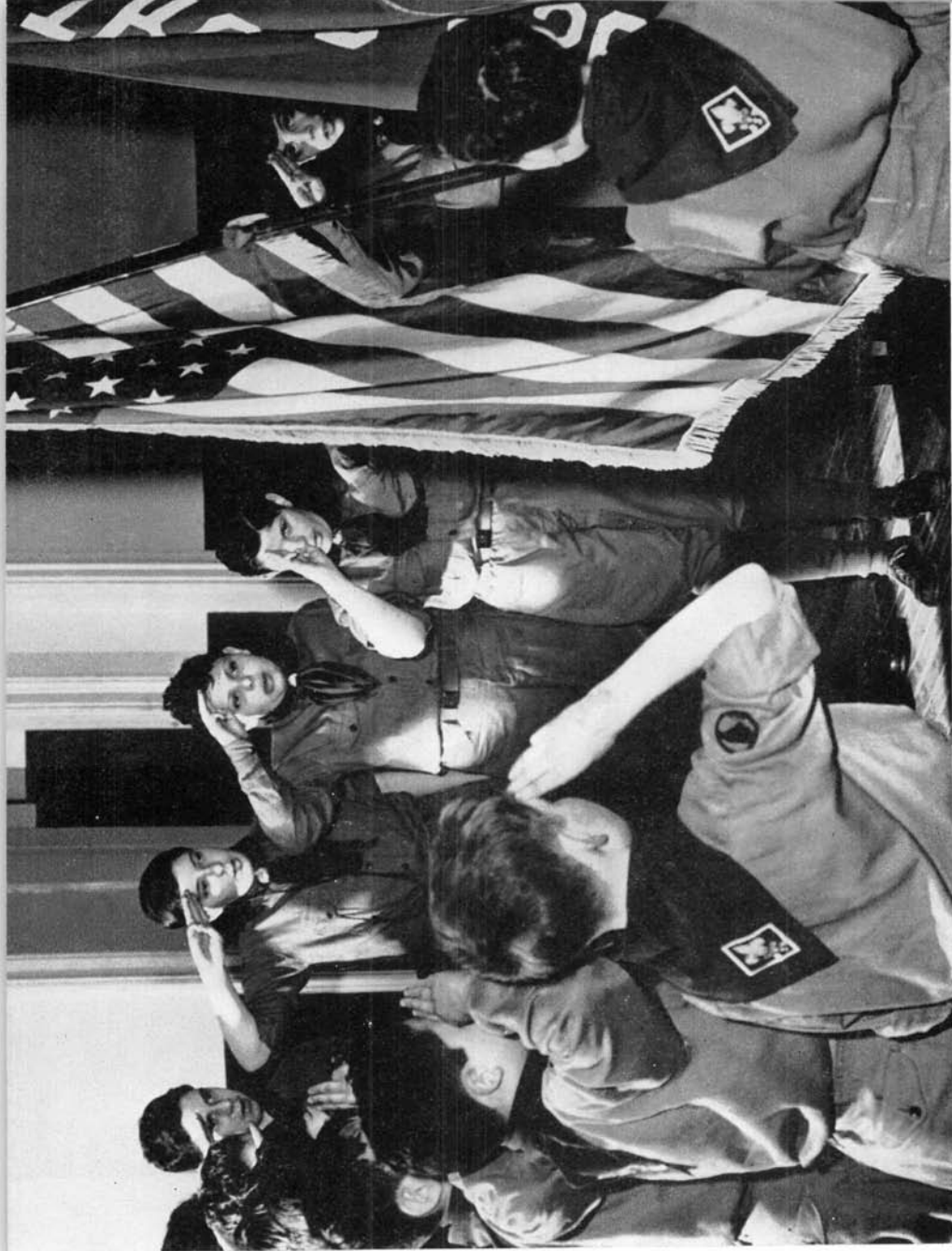
ALEXANDER ALLAND

*Class in home nursing—
Italian Americans*



ALEXANDER ALLAND

Blood donor—
Syrian Americans



ALEXANDER ALLAND

*"One nation indivisible"—
Jewish Americans*